

FRANCE IS DIVIDED



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*La Seconde Patrie*

BY

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THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN  
COMPLETE CONFORMITY WITH THE  
AUTHORIZED ECONOMY STANDARDS



TO MY MOTHER

*Without the help of M. H. Jenkins, who supervised  
and edited the English version, this book could not  
have been conceived or written.*

*F. Wyatt translated the French text into English.*

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## INTRODUCTION

SCHOPENHAUER concluded the introduction to his main work with a remark that still remains a "paradoxical" axiom:

"Truth enjoys only a brief triumph between two long periods during which it is either condemned as paradoxical or despised as trivial."

"The Truth about France" has in the last five years become so "trivial" that the time seems to have come to re-establish its paradoxical aspect.

A paradox or controversial truth is neither an end in itself nor dependent upon the will and intellect of the observer, or his philosophical or political point of view.

It is the rough mould on which historical events are imprinted in a dialectical form that produces the appearance of a paradox. When, by thesis and antithesis, the cast is polished, the true shape emerges with the help of time and a sharper perspective, and can be made the object of a study *sine ira et studio*.

The guilt does not lie with the observer who sees the jagged and uncut facet of things, but with the hardness of events and the unscrupulous or ingenuous men whose callous ruthlessness or criminal indulgence brought about the sudden collapse of an epoch. They force the observer to describe them as they are, and not as so many would like to believe them to be.

Every European in the "good old days" before 1914 had two countries—HIS OWN AND FRANCE.

This saying was an expression of man's eternal aspiration towards something beyond the bounds of narrow nationalism. Napoléon's abortive attempt to unify Europe made France the incarnation of this deep-rooted desire. France has thus become his SECONDE PATRIE.

The dialectical "paradox" of the events of recent years has produced a strange fact. No good European had a country at all he could call his own. But a Frenchman, who before only had one country—France—in common with other Europeans, suddenly found himself with two countries—the official France of "Père Pétain" and the true France of the Resistance. These two Frances are foes to the death, just as throughout French history the two Frances have always been at heart irreconcilable—the France of the "Ci-devant", the eternal yesterdays, the rotten, corrupt, venal egotistical caste of privileges and vested

interests; and the passionate, sincere, struggling masses, the people of France.

The people felt by instinct that there was festering flesh on the political and social body of the community. In former times such diseased flesh had been burnt out ruthlessly with great but momentary suffering, yet the otherwise healthy body soon made a rapid and complete recovery. Modern doctors have a pleasanter method and keep the pain at bay by the use of drugs, which tend to weaken the patient. The osteopath immediately resets twisted and dislocated bones, though the process may be painful. If such damaged bones are allowed to remain too long unset, drugs being used to deaden the pain, a sudden operation eventually becomes imperative and often proves fatal.

Therefore no truth, no event, no story, however cruelly hurtful it may be, can give offence, if the underlying motive throughout is a sincerely honest effort with the final aim of resetting the bones of the social and political body of France and cauterising its "proud flesh".

The people of France, having been isolated for so long, have a right to hear the truth. They will feel that it is not presented to them for the purpose of blaming or humiliating them.

They will feel on every page love and admiration for the common people of France.

The true facts are presented here so that Frenchmen can draw their own conclusions as to why the decline of a period had to coincide with the collapse of France. Self-criticism is vitally necessary to the French nation if in building a new France it is to avoid the mistakes made by the old France.

Frenchmen will understand that this is a warning and an exhortation to them to carry out the necessary political and social operation thoroughly and in time.

No one who knows French history can doubt that once again a biological rejuvenation and a profound spiritual resurgence will arouse the admiration of the world when a new yet eternal France will be reborn.

# BOOK I

## THE TWO FRANCES

It was one of those rare Sunday afternoons when the sky over London is blue and clear, and quite a crowd had gathered round the platform of one of the speakers in Hyde Park, a man with a short red beard.

He was fulminating in hard shrill tones, against Stalin.

A fat, middle-class Englishman, with an Anthony Eden hat and the classical umbrella, immediately supported him.

"Those are the scoundrels we've got to thank for the defeat of poor France."

The speaker turned on him angrily and lashed out:

"The blame for the collapse of France cannot be laid upon either Communists or Fascists, as such. The cause goes farther back than that. The defeat of France can be traced to one salient fact—she was bled far too much for over a century; by 1918 she had lost two million men. The French had become anæmic. Therein lies the true cause of the collapse—a body bled white, weakened and without resistance. The rest and all that followed is but the natural outcome of this biological state of an old people."

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### CHAPTER I

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#### *DEMOGRAPHIC OUTLINE*

In the fifties of the last century there were 370,000 foreigners among the thirty-five million population of France. They were not particularly noticeable in the full tide of Liberalism, modern capitalism and colonial imperialist expansion. Political refugees, especially the Poles after the "re-establishment of order in Warsaw", were given an enthusiastic welcome. The Chamber of Deputies went so far as unhesitatingly to vote a relief fund. Even Heinrich Heine, that rejected lover of a retrogressive Germany, loving France with the "hatred-love" so typical of German intellectuals in their spiritual relations with their radiant neighbours—even he took his share.

Although the most populous country in Europe before the

disastrous experiment of Napoléon's dictatorship, France could not make up the severe loss of blood brought about by the Imperial Republic's venture. She appeared to make a quick recovery after a seemingly fatal blow, though fatal it almost was. The recovery, however, in spite of the new French *bourgeoisie*, who, staunchly in favour of the "Grande Armée" while strongly opposed to the "Grande Révolution", were eagerly grasping the golden opportunities for seizing and sharing colonial empires (to the exclusion of one growing world Power), was only superficial.

The people of France were worn out.

The measure of their exhaustion, like a barometer set to fall, was proportionate to the slow but continuous increase in foreign immigration.

Very few people at that time fully appreciated the fact that the open door and kindly welcome extended to foreigners were merely an instinctive expedient, an external remedy to invigorate the weakened body through the pores.

The last war made a blood transfusion imperative; even the Governments realised that there was not enough strength left to make the organism function.

The foreign elements, however, were not yet of a size to constitute a minority, as the Protestants were. Influential and wealthy, the latter had for long past risen to high office, only to suffer under Laval in 1943 the fate of all minorities—repression.

The foreign elements mixed smoothly with the French, among whom they were living, especially in the towns. They felt the miraculous force of attraction of this strange country. Ever since the influx of Italians and Spaniards under Francis I and the Medici-Valois, France had been assimilating foreign blood like a melting-pot, the fusion being almost complete after a single generation. The collapse during the Second Empire appeared nothing more than a regrettable interlude, a temporary interruption of the economic, financial and political development of a modern capitalist France. It seemed rather the defeat of an individual, the upstart Napoléon III—for preference not talked about in France—than a national *débâcle*, comparable in fact to the aftermath of bleeding a patient formerly adopted by doctors as a method of relief.

Yet the biological barometer continued to fall.

France had 740,000 foreign inhabitants in 1872 and a million ten years later. For forty years the foreign population remained fixed at one million. This figure hardly varied, which is surprising when it is remembered that thousands of these foreigners were naturalised every year and tens of thousands more, born



of foreign parents, acquired full civic rights as French nationals by the mere fact of their birth in France. Every year, therefore, foreigners were migrating to France, because the country, weakened and drained of blood, had need of them.

The fall in the birth-rate was not yet evident, but it was there. And it was apparent not only among the French, who more often than not could boast, if they cared, of an ancestor of Italian, Spanish or Polish, not to mention Alsatian stock, but also among recent immigrants who became French citizens in all perfection, i.e., with all their defects.

This fall in the birth-rate, which had become only too evident by the end of the century, inevitably resulted in a shortage of labour. This was the more noticeable as it was a period of marked industrial development. Efforts were being made even before 1914 to prevent foreign immigration being purely haphazard and unorganised. It was clearly essential to attempt to control the stream of immigrants and transform the infiltration of individuals into collective immigration, rationally planned and adapted to meet the requirements of industry and agriculture. The crying need for such a policy was slowly being realised even then. In the war years European countries could not meet the demand and industry had to be "supplied" with Annamese, Chinese, Moroccans, negroes and other peoples from overseas, all of whom formed small colonies in France.

After the war, which caused the heaviest loss of blood that France had ever suffered and entailed disastrous consequences for this decreasingly fertile nation, foreigners had to be "imported" in the same way as old trees after felling are replaced by saplings, but with this difference—with saplings the nursery can be selected!

The foreign population in France in 1921 numbered one and a half million, in 1926 two and a half million, in 1931 three million, in 1936 two and a half million and in 1940 three and a half million. There were one million Italians, half a million Spaniards in 1936 and nearly a million in 1940, over 200,000 Belgians, 60,000 Swiss, 50,000 Germans (30,000 of whom were to be found in the Eastern Provinces), half a million Poles, 70,000 Russians, 50,000 Czechoslovaks, 30,000 Portuguese, 30,000 Hungarians and 20,000 Austrians, not to mention Rumanians, Yugoslavs, Greeks, Turks and Dutch. The British, however, only totalled 34,000 and the Americans 11,000.

Every sixteenth inhabitant in France was a foreigner, and in some areas this proportion rose as high as one in five.

Sudden prominence was given in 1936 to a "back to the land"

campaign, at a moment when a very different kind of back-to-the-country scheme should have been put into operation. Essential industries should have been decentralized and scattered as a precaution against air attack, but the illustrated papers published photographs of enterprising young couples hardily attempting to bring life back to abandoned and forgotten valleys only to find that they were faced in the South of France with the pioneer tasks of the *Mayflower* settlers. Derelict houses on the slopes of the Cevennes had to be rebuilt and the barren ground to be cleared afresh, although only a few years before the vines had been uprooted just as in Brazil the coffee had been burnt.

In the south there were whole areas where two-thirds of the inhabitants were foreign; these newcomers gratefully accepted the heartbreaking task of clearing ground that had not been cultivated for years. In the rich mining districts in the north the French themselves were not keen on going down into the hot pits. In the Pas de Calais district there were 180,000 foreigners among the 1,800,000 French, and in the north 220,000 among two million. They were, for the most part, Poles—simple people, scarcely literate, with a few heavy drinkers, but without exception industrious and hardworking, sending regularly a good sum home to their families in Poland. They lived in their own villages, kept nearly always to their native tongue, revered the priest and resisted assimilation. Their children, however, began to adopt French as their language and to love this foreign country as their native land.

The French have been called “degenerate” because they did not favour going down the mines nor, in general, soiling their hands with any manual work; they were said to be well on the way to becoming a *Herrenvolk*! Yet the same accusation has never been made against the Germans, though they had always imported more seasonal workers—*Saisonarbeiter*—every spring and were bringing ever-increasing numbers of Polish and Czechoslovak miners into the Ruhr. They differed from the French, however, in their treatment of these newcomers, whom they looked upon as an inferior breed, “Polish pigs”, who ought to be grateful for the opportunity to *schuft* (slave) for the *Herrenvolk*.

But the French peasantry in Normandy, the Central Plateau or the south-eastern provinces, where the rich soil is not tilled exclusively for vineyards, were not degenerate because they were increasingly in need of foreign labour, since Frenchmen were unavailable. They loved their soil more than anything else and laboured hard without being able to comprehend the far-reaching

consequences of the fall in their country's birth-rate.

The Italians in the whole south-east corner of France, from Lyons and Marseilles right to Mentone, and those skilful road builders mostly living round the Place d'Italie in Paris, had one and all fled from the horrors of Fascism only to discover on foreign soil an undying patriotism. They kept themselves strictly apart and spoke only Italian. It was not at all unusual for working-class women to go back to Italy for the birth of their children, so that they would be born in their native land, and then return again to France. These Italians in France formed a compact mass, a potential Fifth Column ready to hand.

The Belgians poured over the frontier every morning to work in France. They came for purely material reasons and had no thought of choosing France as their new country, although 200,000 of their compatriots had done so. They went back to Belgium every evening in special coaches, for with the good wages they earned they could live better and more cheaply on their own side of the frontier. It was work that brought these people to France; the country they did not love overmuch.

The Spaniards in the south really did love France: they tried to assimilate themselves and worked on the land with inner pride and ardent enthusiasm as though it were their native soil. They were not repaid in the same coin, however, and were far from well received, for their admiration for things republican made them suspect in the eyes of the reactionary ruling classes. Yet they remained loyal to the end, to their death, though they were cut off more and more from the life of the nation, left aside like something alien, a medicine the patient capriciously refuses to take on account of its reddish colour, preferring to risk a rise in temperature.

The liberal elements in France had instinctively felt that the weakened body required new blood, but the injection of clotted blood after the last war, without prescription or calculated doses, only produced an increase in the fever. The remedy given without thought or care, the transfusion of blood without proper tests, delayed or applied too late by narrow-minded conservatism, became a dangerous poison instead of a rejuvenating cure.

## CHAPTER II

SCANDALS AND EXPOSURES UNDER THE  
WEIMAR REPUBLIC

APART from the influx of foreign workers after 1918 to cope with the urgent reconstruction required in the northern and eastern provinces of France, there were three other very different types of immigrants.

"And a mixed multitude went up with them" is how the Bible describes the exodus of the children of Israel out of Egypt.

A weakened body often seems to attract microbes and disease, or at best lacks the resistance of the strong and healthy: France after the war soon became the meeting-place for the "mixed multitudes" of the world. They would not have been able seriously to harm, and certainly not to ravage, a sound, well-set-up organism with a strong social infra-structure. But the nation was still stunned by the shock of the 1917 mutinies that "Père Pétain" had quelled, by the agony of holding on for those famous "last five minutes" longer than the other side of the Rhine, by the effects of the titanic struggle on economic, financial, social and political spheres. In such a time, when to dance on a volcano or feast by the "plague-pit of Verona" seemed natural, the amoral and asocial influence of the great international adventurers and the contemptible Italian *apaches* of the Côte d'Azur merely tended to emphasize the progressive disintegration of a feverish body.

The same causes produce the same effects in nature, in nations and in all ranks of society. The same spirit was widespread in the popular masses, with strikes in Imperial Germany in 1917 and mutinies among the troops in Republican France.

The same desire to get the most out of life animated the officers and men of both armies, whether on leave in Paris or Berlin. It was not pure hazard, but the hard consequence of the materialistic historical law manifest in the disintegration of the feudal and *bourgeois* elements in Russia that the bulk of this "mixed multitude", which was for a time to flood Europe, especially Germany and France (though the "continent" of the British Isles was not entirely spared), came mainly from the East. These newcomers were relatively small in number, but noisily active, preying on the countries like oriental locusts, not, however, to be destroyed by the simple expedient of spraying them

with gas from low-flying 'planes. They found the infected soil ready for them and to their taste.

Their first settling ground was Germany, naturally enough—it lay on their route.

Imperial Germany had not been free from scandals in the time of Maximilian Harden, but attempts were made to hush and smother them. The black market, the spread of corruption as the officers of the Imperial Army in the occupied countries slowly realised the inevitability of defeat, the growth of inflation first undermining and then, in 1923, destroying middle-class economic stability, defeat with the resulting riots and poverty—all tended to create the right atmosphere for shady activities.

These disruptive circumstances, however, i.e. the objective factor, would not have been sufficient to provoke the disastrous and well-known consequences if the personal element, i.e. the subjective factor, had not been correspondingly active, had there not been potential crooks ready for get-rich-quick schemes and easy victims eager for the rich spoil held out before their dazzled eyes.

The new masters of Germany were novices in everything and so, too, in the art of exercising power. Ebert and Noske and their followers had, with England's blessing, concluded a pact with the old beneficiaries of Imperialist Germany, capitalist still, to prevent at all costs the most industrialised country in Europe and the "ripest" for progress from reaping the natural consequence of events, the socialisation of means of production, for fear of such a measure leading eventually to Communism. To-day, however, it is obvious that had Scheidemann and Ebert, especially after the Kapp Putsch of 1920, the great and last victory of the German "democratic" masses (whatever might have happened the 20th July, 1944, in Germany, a "mutiny" or "Palace revolution" of Generals was condemned to failure without the support of the masses), kept their promises of November 9th, 1918, at the Unter den Linden Imperial Palace, to nationalise the great key industries and mines in the Ruhr, Germany would have avoided authoritarian Communism, accomplished through evolution the necessary social changes, and thus prevented the revolutionary explosion of Hitlerism and of all the other frustrated forces which sought an outlet for their dynamic energy. The compromise of attempting the pacification of Europe, while at the same time retaining an armed force to combat the "enemy within", paved the way for the activities of the German and foreign crooks.

The decision taken by the *Reichs* tribunal at Leipzig, at the

demand of the *Reichswehr* and with the agreement of the Socialists in power, to declare traitor any German aiding the Allied Commissions in their search for hidden weapons, apart from its disastrous political consequences, forced the Government to hush up the many budget scandals connected with the supply of new arms for the "Black" *Reichswehr*.

Financial transactions carried out under the cloak of national service soon developed into financial and ministerial scandals. The adventurers were quick to seize their chance. It was not long before Germany saw scandal after scandal follow in rapid succession, ruthlessly exploited by the Nationalists.

The country was so flooded with scandals that it is no exaggeration to say that the Barmat affair in 1924 resulted in Hindenburg being elected President of the Republic, or rather Regent, by a mere 300,000 majority over the leader of the "Zentrum", Marx, a democratic Catholic from Western Germany.

Then came Bergmann, Kutisker, Holzmann, Sklarek and a host of others.

Confidence in the Republic was shaken.

When Hitler was brought in by the back door to power by Hindenburg, terrified now by the threats of Schleicher and Leipart, the Trade Unionist leader, to reveal the misappropriation of the Eastern Relief Fund (out of which Hindenburg had been presented with an estate in East Prussia in the name of his son to avoid the later payment of death-duties), he was able to crown the long line of such scandals with the spectacular trial on charges of corruption of the Trade Union leaders in Germany.

It was then that Oldenburg-Januschau, the aged leader of the Junkers, the landed aristocrats and the Nationalist Party, and the very man who had previously told the Kaiser that he needed only a subaltern and ten men to turn the Reichstag out, snapped: "It takes more than seizing power to dip into public funds. To do it skilfully and without exposure takes centuries of practice."

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CHAPTER III

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NEPOTISM RAMPANT: THE REPUBLIQUE DES  
CAMARADES

"The Gauls of all men are the most covetous of money."

*Plutarch's Lives, Pyrrhus.*

FRANCE has for centuries been renowned for scandals of every kind—about the Court, the nobility, the *haute bourgeoisie*, in financial concerns, social matters and political affairs. Scandals were, therefore, in no way peculiar to the *République des Camarades* with its many hangers-on.

A politician's downfall in France is far less likely to be brought about by implication in a scandal than by ridicule. Clémenceau's case, after the Panama scandal, was by no means unique. On the contrary, scandal and political intrigue sometimes "make" a political figure. Such was the case, for instance, with Caillaux, who in his later stupid, blind attack on Léon Blum completely forgot the moving introduction to the book he wrote about his own trial for defeatism in the *First Germanic War* and the scandal of the earlier proceedings against his wife for shooting, on political grounds, the editor of *Figaro*. It was the same, too, with his son-in-law Malvy, who shared his fate and then became as reactionary and odious as his father-in-law. Malvy had no son. His daughter married Peyrouton, who carried on the family tradition.

The ruling classes in France were in the habit of "dipping" into public funds, and particularly "secret funds", the French ministers' source of power and final argument. The corruption and rot remained the divine right of the *camarades*, but did not prevent the nation holding out for five weary years and bleeding almost to death, because the temperature never quite reached 106° and the blank acceptance handed to such leaders as Clémenceau and Foch was finally honoured.

Scandal in the flourishing days of budding capitalism and economic expansion was simply a dangerous weapon, more often than not a boomerang, in the hands of rival groups jostling round the same trough, a symptom, nevertheless, of the sudden breakdown and inevitable collapse at a time of slump.

This symptom is always carelessly ignored by those doing well out of a system, just as brokers during a boom never pay attention to any slight fluctuations in rates or the failure of fifth-rate firms until the black day when the bottom falls out of the market,

ruining the small speculator, though the bigger fry generally manage to escape in time.

The great exertions made in 1914-18 by a racked and weakened body, with stiffening joints, in a spasm of hysteria which made history, flogged the nation's nervous forces almost to breaking-point, producing the classical reaction with all the attendant clinical symptoms. European adventurers, South American parasites and gangsters in general found the rot set in and the ground ready for them. In contrast to the "organised rackets" prevalent in America, they adopted local custom in France and "went to work" individually. Their "work" was made very much easier by the long line of *Ouvrards* (profiteers), who survived the guillotine, outlived the Consulate and Empire, multiplied under the "get-rich-quick" system of Louis Philippe, rose to the fore during the Second Empire and wallowed in the intrigues of the *République des Camarades* to the point of forcing a President to resign on account of his son-in-law's doubtful activities.

The French in general, the ordinary people, are good-hearted, high-minded even, friendly, malleable, industrious and hard-working, not so very frivolous although somewhat casual; sympathetic, with great understanding and not so very coldly logical or totally rational-Cartesian or highly *raisonnable*; but rather thrifty, sometimes even parsimonious, and in rare moments almost grasping. There is no thieving in France, as in Germany or England. The feeling for private property is clearly expressed by the stone party walls built round even the smallest plot of arid land or untilled garden. These innumerable walls trouble the eye of the traveller, for the beautiful countryside is cut into little stone-enclosed oblongs and squares, as if expressing the deep-rooted desire of the French soul to retire, like a *rentier*, before the eyes of the world, seeking to live unobserved and in complete privacy, with no watchful eye on the rest of Europe. This reverence for private property makes the theft of another's belongings a sacrilege, and the punishment is correspondingly heavy. Swindling, however, is a battle of wits. The victim has to be imposed upon, misled and his greed aroused by the dazzling mirage of an "easy" fortune until the moment arrives for the "rogue" to strike. It is a tussle in which the opponent's wiles and stratagems must be cunningly anticipated.

It is almost a disgrace to admit being "had", since the evil intentions of others should be taken for granted. The victim is more often laughed at than pitied, and that his greed should suffer is regarded as legitimate. The *coquin*, that well-known



figure in French comedy, rouses the same amusement from the Bench and often profits by the magistrates' good-humoured tolerance while the victim is awarded a public rebuke.

In Germany, however, crooks had to approach their prospective victims in a rather different way, preying on the mind of the individual concerned, preparing and craftily baiting a trap, the general conditions prevalent after the war making it a very profitable business. Typically enough, the Germans protect their simpletons against the crook's cunning methods and the punishment for swindling is severe, it being sufficient to prove "false statement". In France, the mere fact of lying does not constitute a crime: the victim must be persuaded by illegal means to hand over his wallet. This difference, however slight it may appear, throws a great deal of light on the mental make-up of the two peoples—Hans in his dull simplicity believing every prophet, every promise, however fantastic, mysterious or mystic, and Marianne, with her material outlook in money matters, cautious and shrewd, suspicious of specious advances and never failing to demand it "in writing" as a safeguard. Yet as soon as a Frenchman has put anyone to the test and found him worthy of trust, he will open his heart completely and without reserve, even to a foreigner. That is why there have been more cases in France than anywhere else of abuse of trust brought against shady solicitors, corrupt barristers and crooked lawyers, in whose hands unsuspecting clients had blindly left the control of their affairs. Matters eventually reached the pitch when to say "*ancien notaire*" (ex-solicitor) in Paris was tantamount to saying "*escroc notoire*" (outright swindler). The rogue, however, must not be confused with the crook. The rogue is wide-awake and uses his native cunning. To become a crook his dazzling story of fabulous fortunes to be made must be supported by forged documents. And so, in the north of France, swindles with falsified reconstruction bonds or forged War Damage claims and excessive estimates submitted by "interested" experts formed the beginning in the post-war period of a long series of trials for corruption framed against a rotten administration and a general public too anxious to make money by fair means or foul and leave the "reconstruction" to the Boches, who would "foot the bill". Foreign names did not often figure at that time in the criminal records, for inclusion in which good Frenchmen, sons of the upper middle class, demobilised officers, were disputing the dishonour.

On the Riviera, South American dagoes were beginning to ply their trade in the "weaker sex" style, as depicted in Edouard

Bourdet's play of that name, which invariably amused the public by its exact portrayal of the decadent, one-foot-in-the-grave atmosphere surrounding these dangerous parasites, symptomatic of upper-class society on the decline and heading for degeneracy.

As early, however, as the 1924 general election, which saw the fall of the *bloc bleu*, the right-wing group, with a majority after the 1919 Nationalist elections, again in 1928, and even more in 1932 and 1936, the opposition parties unearthed and published one financial scandal after another for their own political ends. But now more and more of the names linked with those of "crook" politicians were foreign. And the people, for whom a "scandal" meant little more than a gentle whetting of the appetite, like *panem et circenses*, especially *circenses*, to the ancient Romans, were beginning slowly but surely to realise, after the inflation of 1926 and the mounting National Debt, that something was wrong with the works.

The fortunes being amassed by well-known political figures were rousing public comment. Some of them, poor on their arrival in Paris, like Laval from his Auvergne village, soon got rich; others already wealthy, like Flandin, dipped into funds intended for building an air fleet, and got richer still. Of these two, the upstart was later to plunge heart and soul for the phantasmagorical security of the "New Order", just as a religious fanatic, once his faith is lost, becomes the most cynical of atheists, or a renegade the bitterest enemy of his former race or cult or class. The established man of means, after attempting to practise what he had been preaching for years and then appalled at the company round him, which seemed to him doomed, could find a well-upholstered refuge in Algiers, where he was for a long time allowed to continue his former wire-pulling behind the scenes. For since the beginning of his career he has made it a point of honour to beat in this game his lifelong rival.

The international adventurers and crooks were helped in their exploits by another phenomenon, the craze for speculation which affected not only the middle classes, but some of the peasantry as well; just as fever brightens the tired eyes of a suffering patient. The French, on the whole, are fond of a gamble. The casinos, previously confined to Monte Carlo, were beginning to spring up everywhere, not only along the whole Riviera, but in Normandy as well, and mirrored this native bent, which reached its peak-phase in the drawing of the National Lottery, expectantly awaited and attended with great pomp in every district, reminiscent of the last days of the monarchy in Spain.

The stock market, however, or anything with a mere hint of

speculation about it, whether connected with money, shares or land, was the real mania which helped in the end to undermine financial stability and faith in the franc.

Yet the peasant still sweated on the land; yet the little housewife, industrious and not very frivolous, was "busy" all day long, having nothing in common with the generally accepted picture, especially as portrayed in those stupid films, made in France, but marked "for export only". The French workman, the craftsman especially, is very highly skilled, though he likes to "potter" for choice and his output does not reach that of his Russian, Polish, German or English counterpart.

The natural distrust of the French for anyone with an eye on their purse made the foreign adventurers and crooks seek the greater part of their victims among the foreigners themselves. These were easier prey and, because of their own uncertain position, submitted quietly to being swooped upon by unscrupulous vultures. And more significant still, even French crooks showed a predilection for foreign circles for their activities.

Foreign names soon began to figure in the trials for corruption. Those of Klotz, the then Minister of Finance, Oustric and "Madame" Hanau riveted public attention; and the people, shocked and indignant, first reviled and then cursed the men in power, whom they branded practically without exception as corrupt and "bought". (Herriot and Blum were considered honest, and the most that even *Gringoire* could falsely and stupidly bring against the latter was the "export" of his fortune and the purchase of houses and property in Switzerland.)

The Stavisky affair, which broke, tragically enough, just when the economic crisis was slowly reaching towards a France practically autarcic, and so far spared the misery of depressions similar to those in America and Germany, was in one sense the culminating point of a whole series of such scandals. It was, however, more than that. It was a most grievous symptom of a country undermined, wasted, and blighted, tottering on the brink of moral decay, a situation resembling in many traits the epoch immediately preceding the Great Revolution.

This "affair" was really a plain but large-scale swindle with Bayonne *mont-de-piété* shares, pawnshops in France being under municipal control. Its more serious aspect was due to its promotion by a man who had for years been living under the protection of the police of Chiappe, who in the eyes of the general public was always identified with the most corrupt and Fascist elements. Moreover Stavisky's activities were known to the

Paris Public Prosecutor's office, but Prince, the head of the Finance Department there, made no move.

Slowly the facts became known. It was no longer possible to hush up the most far-reaching political exposure, as regards its effects, since the Panama scandal, once Stavisky's cheque stubs were discovered. He had carefully recorded the names of Radical-Socialist and moderate Right-Wing Party men, who had shared in his "generosity". What differentiated this from the earlier cases of political corruption and made it symbolic of the general state of mind was that this time not only fifth-rate politicians, but "interested" judges and chiefs of police, such as Chiappe, had given outright protection to a known blackguard and openly accepted bribes, which this far-seeing crook looked upon as a good investment by way of a cover policy. Politicians in the past had always arranged more discreet means of receiving payment, either in bonds, directorships, founders' shares, or at worst in cash, but invariably through nominees.

The last shred of shame seemed to have been torn down and corruption in all its brutal cruelty stood revealed. This was the more dangerous as the French like to hide transactions of such a kind behind a more or less decent façade, and to couple them with more or less transparent "combines"—as they euphemistically call such arrangements. Even the bare-faced audacity with which Stavisky had for years managed to avoid enquiries, however well-founded the denunciations, and prolong any legal proceedings by the open corruption of the various interested parties would not have made the affair so notorious, and it might well have remained just another case in the criminal annals, had not the specific circumstances made it "ideal for the job" in the eyes of all the Third Republic's enemies. The "job" envisaged was to deal the whole system a crushing blow, the "ideal" means being providentially supplied for at last ousting the "rotten scoundrels" from power.

France had as yet not realised that she was losing the peace, that she had been bled white without attaining the hoped-for results, that the measures taken to guarantee her "security" had achieved nothing and that "the Boches had not paid up".

One section of the public was, however, awake to the fact that the new Germany intended to break the Compiègne armistice by cancelling the Versailles "scrap of paper" in blood. It realised that the depression dating from 1929 and marked by the fall of Sterling and Dollar, had affected France, and that the failure of the great economic conference of 1933 had accentuated the slump and to a certain extent made it an established

fact. It appreciated that the stagnation of the Disarmament Conference would force the country into war again in spite of herself, and that the Ottawa Conference would not really free Britain of her continental obligations, though permitting her to play the ostrich for a long time. The group anxious to act upon its awakened consciousness was weak, disorganised by internal dissension and the break-away from the Socialist Party of the so-called Neo-Socialists like Marquet, Déat and de Monzie, who soon evolved as Neo-Fascists, and handicapped by the fierce opposition of the Communists, for whom at that time the Socialists, those "slaves of Fascism", were of no more account than the Fascists themselves.

Reactionaries of every hue, on the other hand, emboldened by the success of their great masters, Hitler and Mussolini, gathered together and joined forces with the obvious intention of "marching on Paris" at a signal from de la Rocque at the head of his Croix de feu.

The Stavisky affair provided a welcome opportunity, and they immediately plunged the country, where tension was already high, into a state of feverish excitement, reminiscent of the not so very distant days of General Boulanger's attempts at dictatorship. That not one of the better-known Left-Wing names could be connected with the affair did not suit their malicious purposes. They were compelled, therefore, to descend to the foulest methods, sowing suspicion and discrediting those politicians who stood for the Republic in the eyes of the people, in order to create the right atmosphere of the "18th Brumaire". The mysterious death of Prince, who may have committed suicide for fear that the enquiry would reveal his double life and disastrous financial position, as well as a 100,000 francs loan made to him by persons unknown, and whose disappearance was made more sensational by dramatic developments, in the true style of a French mystery thriller, in an attempt to save the family honour, gave rise to the story of a political "gang", with Camille Chautemps as leader, and his brother-in-law Pessard, the Public Prosecutor, Prince's superior, as suspected murderer.

Pessard, however, lacked the physical resistance to withstand such a campaign of hate, and literally went to pieces. Salengro, Minister of the Interior in the first Popular Front Government under Blum, was to lack the mental stability and committed suicide as a result of the hideous attacks published in *Gringoire* denouncing him as a deserter. Chautemps never recovered from the blow which almost succeeded in finishing the traditional political power of his family. He made up his mind thenceforth

to choose betrayal rather than go through the mill again. With Pessard in mind, his brother-in-law destroyed by Fascist hatred, Chautemps cast his vote at Bordeaux, the thirteenth against twelve, giving the Republic, which had raised his family to power but also permitted its dire humiliation, a cowardly stab in the back, only to be terrified immediately afterwards by his own action and flee from the scene of his crime.

The moment had now come to set the spark to feelings running high, and on February 6th, 1934, the attempt to seize power was made. This date is one of the most important in the history of modern France and Europe as a whole. Although this fact is fully understood on the Continent, it is not yet appreciated to the same extent in the Anglo-Saxon countries.

February 6th, 1934, corresponds to November 9th, 1923. It was for the political development of France what the Munich Putsch was for Germany. After Munich Hitler realised that he could never rise to power against the will of the *Generalstab*, the military clique in alliance with and socially representing to a certain extent the powers in real control, mainly behind the scenes under the Weimar Republic, but coming right out into the open with Schleicher's advent to power. So Hitler was obliged to change his political plans. He had to learn to be patient and await the propitious moment for entering the Chancellery, even, should it be necessary, by the back door.

He waited for ten years.

The Fascists in France underwent the same experience; they had to wait for six years. A military defeat, entailing the disorganisation of the progressive forces, had proved a preliminary essential for the setting up of Fascism in any of the continental countries. It was the same in France. The Fascists were only able to seize power at the cost of a military defeat, because in time of peace "the true France", i.e. the great masses of the people, would be too strong, too deeply steeped in the Republic. The Pétains, Lavals, Marquets and Bergerys did not hesitate to sacrifice the country to arrive at their aims.

This Fascist uprising in 1934 was certainly not quelled by the "courage" of Daladier or his wretched Minister of the Interior, Eugène Frot, over whom some Fascist barristers in the Courts emptied not long afterwards the contents of a bedroom utensil, though this did not prevent him later becoming an associate of theirs, renowned for his defeatism . . . maybe it even persuaded him. These two both resigned twenty-four hours after the trouble started, because they could not agree to firing on the "people". This Fascist attempt failed because of the cowardice

of those taking part, the most reactionary section of the ex-Service group who had forgotten the pounding at Verdun and quailed before a few machine-guns outside the Chamber, since they had no wish to give their lives either for their ideas or later for "Danzig" or even for France.

The abortive attempt of February 6th had an unforeseen, but none the less logical sequence. It was remembered that during the war a fairly sprightly old man, Clémenceau, and after the 1926 inflation an aged, outworn politician, Poincaré, had saved France.

Once again, therefore, an old man, this time Doumergue, was asked to "save" the nation, already in the throes of internal dis-sension, and to avert at all costs a repetition of the disastrous outbreak of the forces in antagonism. As a result of the Stavisky affair old men were put into power one after another and rigged out as French statesmen. Doumergue was the first of this long line, but found it expedient suddenly to quit in the autumn of 1934, leaving Paris and the "red belt" almost on the run, for the country was still strong enough to resist any totalitarian tendencies. The reactionaries drew the same inference from this incident and their failure as Hitler did from his set-back of November 9th, 1923—to gain control by devious means and get into the Government by the back door, since it was evident that the "red belt", whether in Berlin or Paris, would always be powerful enough to repel any direct attack. From their master, Hitler, the French Fascists acquired great wisdom in political matters—they learned to wait quietly for the propitious moment and take over the reins of government "legally". Hitler raised his famous battle-cry "Legality"—reorganised his S.S. and S.A., and began to worm his way into the Reichstag. No one believed him to be sincere. All were convinced that this change of policy was only a feint. His oath before the Leipzig Court in 1930 where he attempted as a witness to save three *Reichswehr* officers accused of Nazi activities, was generally considered as a provocative perjury. He declared that his S.A. were only there for his protection and not to attack the Republic, and that he would in any event never seize power by force.

Rudolf Olden alone, foreign editor of the great democratic paper, the *Berliner Tageblatt*, understood the dodge. With prophetic foresight he raised the cry of anguish: "Do not believe him, for he is telling the truth!" He knew that a Hitler pretending to lie and even appearing deliberately to do so in the eyes of his indignant followers, but who would in actual fact poison the political atmosphere in Germany and later throughout Europe

by half-truths and intricate falsehoods and slowly sap the resistance of a body already undermined, would be far more dangerous than a Hitler madly, furiously and openly attacking as on November 9th, 1923, at Munich.

De la Rocque too set about reorganising his Croix de feu and began worming them into the Chamber of Deputies through his own "P.S.F.", the French Social Party, or indirectly through other parties. He even went so far in his cynical "goodwill" as to honour the Synagogue with a visit, thus apparently giving some justification to the short-sighted policy adopted by the Brothers Weil of the banking-house of Lazar Frères. Bonnet, representative of this policy and with interests in the bank, is still in Paris, while Felix David Weil was unable to take with him to America the art treasures secreted in the strong-rooms of the Banque de France at the beginning of the war.

That the first attempt at wielding power under cover of "puppet" ancients had failed with Doumergue in no way caused the reactionaries to despair. The general public's first reaction, recalling "Papa" Doumergue's fine record, proves them right in thinking that the able use of this method would always produce the results desired. Hitler had found this method very successful with Hindenburg, who had the grace to choose the right moment to die, and Mussolini, for the same reason, was careful not to overthrow "the little monkey". People have instinctively believed since the days of republican Athens that a policy approved by the aged, with their experience and wisdom and moreover their apparent disinterest as safeguard, can only be inspired by the common good and not guided by the interest to safeguard the privileged class. This unfounded belief, like so many other false "myths" deep-rooted in the masses, explains to a great extent the widespread adulation of Pétain in 1940 and the short-lived revival of his popularity in April 1944. But while Hindenburg in Germany formed only the curtain behind which the young strength of the Nazis was preparing for world conquest, the assumption of power in France by old men and outworn politicians in turn, from Doumergue to Weygand, meant that the *bourgeoisie*, misled, deceived, divided, tired, bloodless and exhausted, had chosen a form of governmental representation adequate to its failing strength. This equation was mystically completed the day that Pétain, with a gesture of transcendent faith, made "a gift of his person to the nation".

And how that common crook, Alexandre Stavisky, assassinated by Chiappe's men to prevent him "talking", and at least the historical instrument, if not the basic cause, of this inevitable



chain of events, how he would cynically have laughed at this *cadeau* worthless in any pawnshop, since he was the very man indeed to enjoy to the full such a Rabelaisian joke.

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CHAPTER IV

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*THE CHAMPS ELYSEES*

THE people reaching Germany from Eastern Europe after the war were not all of the Barmat and Kutisker type. A number of respectable business men settled in Berlin and introduced a new note into the commercial and industrial life of the city. The Russian influence was particularly noticeable, first in artistic circles and then among the people as a whole. Russian plays had a surprising revival and at one time Russian cabarets were the best in Berlin, while the growing film industry was glad of Russian and Hungarian talent. There was a definite improvement in the German woman's appearance, brought about to a large extent by the living example of the elegant Russian beauties. This new note was spreading fast, and not only in the Russian night-clubs, which at one moment made Berlin, at the expense of Paris, the gayest capital in Europe to American eyes, more especially after a coach full of tourists was upset by an excited Parisian crowd, reacting at the peak of French inflation in 1926, just as the Germans did in 1923, against the "cut-price sale" of France by insulting "the bargain-hunters".

The Russian business men and agents had an excellent eye for the best sites for theatres, cinemas, shops and blocks of flats. The appearance of the German capital was rapidly changing, especially the "West End" round the "Zoo". It is well known that Germany was modernising her whole industrial equipment with the help of British and American financial support. At the same time the foreigners there were bringing amusements up to date with the aid of public funds, which although intended to bolster economic reconstruction, came their way easily through underground channels. Their subtlety and quickness were admirably suited to this period, marked by a surprising mixture of American hustle and German ingenuity, always in search of untried possibilities, until Schacht's financial programme brought this easy existence to an end and everything collapsed on the famous Black Friday in 1929, in a financial, economic, social and political crash, from the ruins of which there was to emerge Hitler.

The majority of those from Eastern Europe, the Russians, Poles, Lithuanians, Ukrainians and Hungarians did not wait for the crash before leaving a country where the pickings were becoming increasingly meagre. Once the currency had been stabilised again, they foresaw the catastrophe ahead and quickly sought another field for their activities.

The great exodus of this floating population began in 1924. France, with its promising financial instability and later ruinous inflation, the technique of which matters they had just perfected in such a way that they could always be turned to advantage, then witnessed the first mass inflow of foreign business men, craftsmen, architects, engineers, doctors, lawyers and artists, for the most part Russians. It was more difficult for them to make a place for themselves in Paris than it had been in Berlin. But they were soon to be found in industry, trade and the professions, conspicuous in the artistic and pleasure life of the city. They were received with benevolent sympathy on account of their political hue and in memory of the pre-war Grand Dukes. Though they were no longer able to spend the millions the French had lent them in Russia, they brought the money more often than not in the form of jewels, which they were obliged to put on the market at very reduced prices. People remembered, too, that they had fought on the same side and moreover that these White Russians might overthrow Lenin one day and pay off the old debts. As soon as one of them succeeded in opening a shop or a restaurant, or starting a small factory, he did not drop his compatriots, for a feeling of common misfortune seemed to bind them together into a "mutual help society".

The same thing happened now in Paris as in Berlin. Everything Russian became ultra-fashionable. Russian shops of all kinds, including dressmakers' run by genuine members of the old nobility, which gave French customers as well as American a peculiar psychological thrill, partly compassion, partly satisfaction, and new industries—especially chemical ones, not to mention cabarets, restaurants and above all night-clubs—all these and more flourished exceedingly in Paris. The films were later to exploit this period, especially the Grand-Duke taxi-driver story, to the point of inanity. It was, however, a fact that in 1938 over a third of the taxi-drivers in Paris were foreigners, the majority of them Russians.

These 1924 emigrants came slowly to discover that infinite variety of innumerable districts—Paris: for they soon became aware that the word Paris represents a beautiful myth, that the different *arrondissements* are but small country towns with

distinct local traditions, habits and customs like the different French provinces, but all imbued with the indefinable air of *La Capitale*, a city, not only representing the whole country but its very incarnation. The *bourgeois* element which formed the greater part of the newcomers was all too naturally attracted by the finest residential districts, the XVI and XVII *arrondissements*; those less comfortably off chose the XV *arrondissement*, and the Russian working-class emigrants went out to Montrouge or Boulogne-sur-Seine. The XVI *arrondissement* soon became the Russian colony's veritable capital, and at the Café Murat all kinds of business was done—in Russian. The new arrivals quickly appreciated the great difference between this ancient city with lovely buildings exquisitely matured through the centuries and only superimposed fifty years ago with the regularity of fine boulevards and magnificent avenues by Baron Haussmann, and the *Wasserkopf* (hydrocephalus) Berlin, as the recently adopted capital of the new Reich has often been nicknamed by the southern Germans, with its lack of tradition and hasty constructions in the Kaiser's hideous megalomaniac style. They did not at the same time fail to notice that everything in Berlin, though lacking in taste and refinement, was new, and for that very reason modern, while along the outer boulevards in Paris new blocks of flats were being built without bathrooms or any modern conveniences. They were shocked by the poor window displays in the shops, with the exception of the few stylish showrooms along the main boulevards or in the rue de la Paix. They did not take long to note that the ordinary goods in France were inferior and that only luxury articles were well made—but then, the best in Europe. They had met in Germany with a clear-cut Americanised spirit of reconstruction, a reorganisation and modernisation, and fairly easily—money. They were faced everywhere in Paris with a spirit of apathy whenever suggestions were made for rebuilding industry and trade on modern lines or introducing new industrial methods promising a better output and more profitable returns; and they found it particularly difficult to come by that greatest of all essentials—money.

The Frenchman does not like tying up his money in dead machinery, with no immediate profits, and having to wait for the slow return of his capital outlay. Such an idea strikes no chord in his strangely conflicting nature, his urge to want both a steady income and the excitement of a gamble. A smaller but sure profit is more in his line. Yet one fine day he will risk everything on the market in the hope of a *coup-de-chance*, which may make him rich overnight . . . or lose him the fruits of a lifetime's

work. He is cautious and wary until the passion carries him away and he risks the lot in one mad plunge. Besides, if grandfather, who founded the business, could work in a dark, insanitary back-room (one of the main "revolutionary demands" made by the workers in 1936 was for the installation of lavatories in factories), why knock down the walls and install new machinery if this style of existence still brings him in enough to put money by, so that he can eventually retire to the country as *rentier* and spend his days quietly fishing?

The great days of French intellectual brilliance and colonial-imperialist expansion were over.

French capitalism was no longer dynamic, but static and conservative. The aim now was to maintain the position achieved at the cost of blood shed by the sons of the people; every effort was made to organise, maintain, protect and safeguard the existing system. For it was soon clear to the Russians that the great key-industries and trusts were in the firm grip of a hundred or so families and well protected against the intrusion of foreign influences, that the real governors of France were the banks. Banks, however, have no confidence in foreigners and only allow credit against the deposit of securities and to old-established concerns.

The Russians proved ingenious people, as wide-awake in Paris as they had been in Berlin to spot good, undeveloped sites in the capital, likely to become recognised centres, of which Paris already had many—the Place de la République, the commercial centre; the great boulevards, with the big stores and stylish shops; Montparnasse and Montmartre, two districts, distinct one from the other, the one international, the other more peculiarly French, but both centres for the capital's artistic and night life; the Latin quarter, the ancient home of learning, the boisterous arena of politically active students and often the turbulent scene of tumultuous clashes between those of the extreme parties; the Jewish quarter round the rue Roziers; Belleville, the home of French, foreign and Jewish craftsmen; the rue de la Paix and rue de Rivoli, luxuriously exclusive; and the Champs Elysées, still at that time the lovely, almost sylvan avenue frequented by the Paris loungers, who had slowly abandoned their boulevards, haunts of Napoléon III's time. These Russians penetrated into other districts as well with their shops, restaurants and cabarets. But failing to conquer them completely they decided to create an entirely new *quartier* truly their own.

The Champs Elysées and the little streets near by were close to their homes in the XVI and XVII *arrondissements*. They

foresaw and anticipated, even to a certain extent originated, this westward trend in the capital. Convinced that the French would never risk their money in new concerns, they raised capital from wealthy compatriots and other enterprising foreigners. It was certainly the business men among the first Russian refugees who were responsible for the rapid development of the whole district from the Avenue de la Grande Armée right up to the Place de la Concorde, making it a fashionable area, offering visitors from all the world over the whole concentrated, brilliant diversity of modern life. Stupendous blocks of luxury flats were built with ultra-modern shops below, up-to-date hotels were opened, and large cafés and restaurants as well as night-clubs sprang up on this rich ground like mushrooms after a warm night of rain. Elegant motor showrooms displayed the latest models, and famous French and foreign firms opened branches there. The French newspaper and foreign Press offices were caught in the movement, and no less than fourteen magnificent cinemas, six built between 1938 and 1940, completed this miraculous transformation.

The most surprising thing of all was that these restaurants, cafés, bars, cinemas, showrooms and window displays, even in the passage-ways leading off the Champs Elysées (these alleys had none of the sombre mystery of those along the great boulevards, but were wide and light), and the outside appearance of the huge new blocks had the unmistakable touch of French patina. It seemed as though the capacity of the French culture to transform in a short time by the power of its peculiar genius, as though in a magical furnace, the immigrants from many different countries, and to gallicise them, at least in appearance, had been transmitted to these new buildings and was reflected in them. Perhaps the Russian leaning towards everything French contributed to this effect, but it is more probable that the united efforts of French and foreign engineers and architects produced this miracle of building in ultra-modern style, while still retaining the French atmosphere through the use of the latest technical ideas, tempered by the French genius.

Everything went well at first and flourished exceedingly, and the founders' shares brought large profits to the enterprising people who had risked heavily. But from 1934 the depression brought in its trail the decline of the Champs Elysées, which was as rapid as the discovery and blossoming had been fabulous. The hat and dress shops soon became "ordinary" and "inexpensive", not only in price, but in taste and display as well. At the same time, unfortunately, the French touch, which might

have brought harmony into the jumbled development of the loveliest and widest avenue in the world, was becoming less and less apparent. The restaurants began to take on the appearance of a cross between a German *Bierhaus*, a Viennese *Gartenlokal*, a vulgarly ornate Berlin *Haus Vaterland*, a St. Petersburg French-style smart establishment and the good old Paris *bistrot*. The cinemas and bars were suddenly all too reminiscent of the cold, glaring erections in a new town lacking tradition and refinement. When the large cafés went bankrupt and had to close, small bars and *bistrots* opened in their place. When the large hotels were no longer well patronized they were obliged to break up their luxury suites into single rooms.

The Champs Elysées, the world's luxury avenue and lovely playground, soon became an ordinary *quartier petit-bourgeois* still dominated by innumerable foreigners but invaded every week-end by large crowds promenading as though on the great boulevards, accustoming themselves quickly to the American style milk-bars and huddling in front of the "guinea" shops, the majority of which opened on Sundays as in the Jewish quarter. The final stage in this change-over was marked by the opening of a "Prix-Unic", the French Woolworth, right in the centre of the Champs Elysées, with its stuffy, crowded atmosphere of rubbish—wrapped in cellophane.

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CHAPTER V

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### THE FOREIGN POPULATION IN FRANCE

IN 1911 there were 1,114,000 foreigners among the 40,000,000 population of France. Of the whole total, approximately twelve and a half million, of whom 550,000 were foreigners, were in paid employment.

As a result of the war the total figure in 1921 showed a decrease of 1,000,000, but an increase of 100,000 foreign wage-earners. This figure, however, soared between 1921 and 1926, symptomatic of the reconstruction years in France. The French population in the country remained static, but the foreign element increased by 1,000,000, a number proportionately much greater than the figure for the United States during the flourishing years of European emigration to America. Foreign workers formed the bulk of the immigrants at the time, but there were one and a half million foreigners not in paid employment in France.

In 1931 the foreign population totalled 3,000,000 and was made up of 1,200,000 wage-earners and 1,800,000 others. The depression can be seen pitilessly reflected in these figures. By 1936, namely, the foreign element had noticeably decreased by 500,000. One fact alone will clearly demonstrate the lack of organisation in this movement and the evident inability of the machinery set up to deal with the "importation" of foreign labour to meet the needs of industry and agriculture. At the very moment when the great mass exodus of foreign workers, often under the roughest, most appalling conditions, was taking place, the great industries, actuated by pure self-interest harmful to the community, were still bringing in foreign labour for one purpose only—to employ them at a lower wage than French workers and thus always have a "reserve" available, which, according to Lassalle, must affect the law of supply and demand.

In point of fact, the records for 1931 showed 100,000 workers as having left the country, but also the entry of 80,000 for both agriculture and industry. The respective figures were 110,000 and 80,000 for 1932, 50,000 and 45,000 for 1933, 40,000 and 60,000 for 1934, and 70,000 and 40,000 for 1935. While the Ministry of Works ("Travaux Publics") in 1930 had a total staff of 300,000, of whom 120,000 were foreigners, in 1935 there were only 75,000 out of a total of 240,000. The employment figure in 1930 for the industrial area of the north and Pas de Calais region included 75,000 foreigners in its 190,000 total. But even in 1935 the foreign element here, which had dropped by 25,000, still constituted one-third of the 150,000 total employed by the Ministry in this region.

It is an ironical fact that this ratio survived the fall of France and remained unchanged during the period of accentuated foreign persecution in the summer of 1942. It came to light in June, 1942, that Laval had by then handed over to Sauckel 170,800 workers (including 35,600 women) and that of these 57,000, or one-third, were foreign. In 1944, in spite of the people's heroic struggle against recruitment for compulsory labour in Germany, Laval had succeeded in forcing over 500,000 workers to "volunteer".

Between 1922 and 1929 France was obliged to "import" 850,000 workers for industry and 550,000 for agriculture.

The figures clearly proved that, however preponderant the working-class element appeared among the emigrants to France, especially when the numbers of the worker's family were added, the figure for other classes was also considerable. The middle-class foreigners settled mainly in the capital and the big towns.

Greater Paris (Department of the Seine) with 200,000 foreigners in 1914, had 460,000 in 1931 out of a total of 5,000,000; in 1937 400,000 and over 500,000 in 1940. Only 50,000 of these foreigners were living in hotels or furnished rooms, the majority of them having settled down permanently in their own homes.

In the south, there were a number of Spaniards and Italians working on the land, having either bought their own farms or rented them on a long lease. Many of the Italians established in Nice, Marseilles and Lyons were hotel-keepers or private contractors for public utilities, while the Italian workmen gave proof of their renowned skill as road builders.

In Paris, especially in the populous Belleville quarter, foreign craftsmen, for the most part Jews, who had fled from the Polish ghettos and persecution, quickly imparted the indefinable touch of French fashion to the fancy goods impregnated with their flamboyant eastern fantasy, especially in Morocco leather-work.

In some parts of the XVth and XVIth *arrondissements*, where the French street markets, open to the sky, reflect so adequately the spontaneous expression of the people's natural vivacity and its highly developed interest in the art of good eating, and add to the picturesque and peaceful aspect of the capital, you could think you were in a small Russian country town. The stall-holders, arriving straight from the markets in the early morning, would find everything prepared for them by the district street-workers, so that they had only to spread out their wares—mountains of fresh vegetables and the rarest early produce, salt and freshwater fish, red lobsters and smooth crayfish, always appetisingly fresh, although the use of ice to preserve these delicacies was unknown (the freshness of this shell-fish heaped without ice was always an intriguing mystery to foreigners in Paris and visitors to the "Halles", the capital's huge larder), a wonderful selection of cheeses to delight the gourmet, rich milk-fed veal, tender baby-goat and spring lamb. These stall-holders were all French, while the majority of the customers were foreign, Russian, Poles, Lithuanians, Italians and Germans. And yet it was not the customers who gave this the appearance of a market in Eastern Europe, it was the French stall-holders themselves who often evoked the resemblance to a Russian fair. It was as though the two peoples were imbued with the same passion, the same love and the same understanding for the culinary arts of this world, with this one difference, that the French had studied these arts more carefully, cultivating, perfecting and organising them through the centuries with greater



enthusiasm than anything else, except perhaps love.

But the narrow alleys near by, badly paved and dirty, were swarming with tiny Russian and Jewish shops. The rough wooden trestles, standing on each side of the entrance, dispersed everywhere inside and even filling the window, were covered with red caviare, salted cucumbers, sickly-sweet Halva, Russian Easter-cake, stuffed carp, hot Borscht, that peculiarly Russian vegetable soup, hot meat balls rolled in cabbage, honey-cakes, Jewish Striezel, Alsatian and Cracovian sausage, Russian hors-d'œuvre, Italian *ravioli*, German Rollmops, flat peasant loaves from Auvergne or coarse Russian rye-bread, side by side with Jaffa oranges and Italian lemons, Normandy apples and the lovely grapes of France.

The few French shops in this district, the delicatessens, the grocers and dairies seemed by comparison an example of Puritan austerity in their simplicity and cleanliness. The tidy shelves with goods carefully arranged, especially the neat rows of wines and liqueurs, were in clashing contrast with the abounding *pêle-mêle* of the others—a manifest emanation of the Russo-Jewish spirit with a light touch of Italian colour. But all these shops, whether French, Russian, Jewish or Italian, had one thing in common—the smell of garlic. In fact, the Frenchman, who delights in flavouring his food, like his gallic wit, with a touch of garlic, would utterly fail to understand the German epithet of opprobrium *Knoblauchjude*, and even Laval, that dark-skinned reminder of the Arab invasion of the Massif Central, would instinctively recoil before adopting this final expression of his masters' taste—Garlic-Jew.

These foreigners lived in peace together without competitive rivalry arousing any evil instincts among them. It is true that a number of the French themselves were strangers to Paris, hailing from the provinces, from Auvergne, Brittany and the south, it being a well-known fact that only a minority of the inhabitants of the capital are Parisians. Newcomers themselves, they were the better able to understand the foreigners' somewhat precarious position. But the main thing was that by nature they were tolerant, unconsciously imbued with the great ideas of a Revolution no longer remembered as such; so they willingly accorded to others the right to live in their own way, especially to provide their own compatriots with the national products of their countries.

This attitude of mind prevalent among the French shopkeepers was strengthened by another characteristic trait, very likeable at a time of pitiless world competition among the great international

industries. Envy is not one of his vices and he is too much of an individualist to make an unscrupulous rival. The old proverb, "Live and let live", is perhaps the only phrase in which words and meaning correspond to reality in French life.

Competition was so keen in Germany and dishonest practices so rife that special laws had to be introduced, and cases often came up before the Courts, but it was sufficient for the French law to interpret Article 1382, that elastic Article of the Civil Code relative to damage caused to another when dealing with cases of this type, with the sole exception of a few enactments protecting certain specific products such as wine and liqueurs by seal of guarantee.

Even later, when the Government attempted to spread a hatred of foreigners and exploit the fear of competition, the idea was favourably received by the liberal professions, exactly as in Germany, but not too well by the man in business or small shopkeeper. The small grocer, for instance, could not rail against foreigners because they generally worked longer and harder in their new country, believing with reason this to be the only way of overcoming the many difficulties and obstacles in making a livelihood. The people from Eastern Europe found the custom to be almost the same as in their own countries, particularly grocers' shops keeping open far into the night and even on Sundays. If their French counterparts did not work quite so hard they were nevertheless busy all day, *toujours aux affaires*, devoting almost the same enthusiasm to it as the worker to "pottering". The similarity of outlook, therefore, lessened any possibility of resentment which foreign competition might have provoked.

To some extent, too, the Frenchman in business, with his background of conservatism and accepted traditions, was not influenced, because his tendency not to interfere in his competitors' affairs as long as his own interests seemed unaffected had turned him into a staunch upholder of the disastrous *Je m'enfoutisme* attitude which had slowly pervaded the whole nation. Although a small shopkeeper directing a customer whose wants he could not supply to another shop might have a certain charm, it could also be thought a pity that his innate conservatism should prevent him from having a more logical and "rational" reaction—to order a stock from his wholesaler.

The foreign business men arriving after the Russians, who had been the pioneer explorers and as veterans were the immigrants' counsellors and spokesmen, all underwent the same experience.

They were to be seen in the cafés round the Bourse, in Montparnasse, along the main boulevards or in the Champs Elysées, discussing one fabulous scheme after another. If, as often was the case, their ideas were sound, they soon learned the difficulties of putting them into practice, because "the Frenchman does not like change", "he dislikes the showy modern style", "it is best to begin in a small way", and above all "there is no money in Paris".

Many of these foreigners, acting against the advice given them, invested their money, with no knowledge of the country or language, in unsound concerns and consequently lost it in this almost honest fashion—provided they had first managed to escape the crooks and vultures. Others, however, were wiser and more cautious, especially the wealthy, who could afford to await the right moment, first testing the new atmosphere, picking up a hint here and there and slowly accustoming themselves to the conditions peculiar to this Babel of all nations, Paris.

The French city men in big business were firmly opposed to intrusion of these newcomers, whose numbers increased after the advent of Hitler to power. They made entry into their professional associations difficult. On the other hand, the big manufacturers and wholesalers, naturally enough, gave no credit; but they would not even supply anyone not a member of one of these associations. This proved an excellent method of doing away with undesirable competition, such indirect means being commonly employed in France because the free competition policy of the last century prohibited any definite restriction in a direct and brutal manner.

The rich business men, however, often with considerable experience in their native countries, knew the right way to overcome such resistance—by sharing the profits. It was increasingly common for company prospectuses to list well-known French names followed by foreign names not in themselves unknown. This tendency was increased and later strengthened by another factor. French industries being but little developed, the country was almost flooded after the war with German goods. The ordinary Frenchman felt no repugnance at buying them, because they were better and cheaper than the French products. And moreover he was often unaware that he was buying German goods, because the law making the stamping of the country of origin compulsory was only introduced in 1937. When German, Austrian and Czech manufacturers and business men and others like them began to arrive after 1933 they did not come with empty hands. More often than not they brought their processes

and inventions, and the majority their money. They were met at first with the disastrous unwillingness of the French to give up their old, lazy habits of importing finished goods and their apathetic opposition to manufacturing them themselves. The new arrivals, however, whether industrial magnates, big business men, exporters of world repute, highly skilled engineers or technical experts, were not imbued with the *nitchievo* attitude of the Russian emigrants, who had much in common with the spirit of France in decline, but were keen, active, energetic and good at organization, with too much of the *Forschheit* or arrogance of the Germans to let themselves be discouraged by natural obstacles.

They were quick to criticise everything French, labelling it "hopeless" or *moche*—"junk". Nothing was as good as *chez nous* and they were soon dubbed the *chez-nous-ites*.

Yet were they not justified in criticising the out-of-date installations, the institutions outmoded by a century, the lack of interest in new ideas, the narrow, conservative spirit, the old-fashioned processes giving low output or even showing deficit, the meagre industrial capacity, the lack of social legislation, with the attendant resistance, almost horror, displayed by the *bourgeoisie*, terrified at the prospect of the gradual introduction of such legislation, the slovenliness and sometimes even dirt and lack of hygiene? Were not these the very reasons put forward even by the military experts at the Riom Trial to explain the industrial and moral unpreparedness of the country for the danger approaching, as though hypnotised by the long neck of a poisonous snake, the whole nation was paralysed in its vital organs long before the fatal pounce? Was it not these same French people, the very ones who had complained the most about the arrogance of the *chez-nous-ites*, who, themselves exiles and refugees scattered to the four corners of the world, were in their haughty blindness the loudest critics in London and New York, labelling everything "not as good as *chez nous*"? And were they not perhaps in turn justified, since they took with them on their wanderings, "under the soles of their shoes", a treasure accumulated through the centuries—French spirit and French culture, two priceless jewels radiant throughout the world with their chameleon-like brilliance?

Has the world perhaps disregarded too lightly the lessons of history? How the Jewish refugees from Spain, welcomed with the traditional hospitality of the Dutch, created commercial and diamond centres in Amsterdam and Antwerp. How the Huguenots introduced the linen industry to Ireland and the silk industry to Prussia—one Berlin district harboured over 20,000

French people in 1800, their descendants being still well known even under Hitler, their names having repute in trade, industry, the sciences and above all in the German Army, thus giving the lie to all the twaddle on the subject of races and *Blut und Boden* (Blu-Bo), blood and soil. How refugees from Southern Germany formed colonies in Transylvania and the Volga region, and what magnificent work the Greeks did in the Middle East, though this was destroyed at one stroke after the war against the Turks in 1922 by the repatriation of over a million people in a spirit of blind nationalism, which swept the whole of Europe after the war.

These magnificent feats had probably only been possible because the French Revolution had not then created the idea of nation as opposed to State; nor had the exaggeration of this idea and the misinterpretation of Wilson's Fourteen Points rendered the application of the simplest of Erasmus' humanist ideas and even the natural humanitarian laws of the Middle Ages impossible.

There are, however, always people to be found in France, according to André Siegfried, whose hearts are to the left, but whose cheque-books are to the right. A few of the industrialists, deputies and senators clearly saw the danger of a highly developed industrial Germany and a France incapable of keeping pace, and favoured a simple method of establishing new industries by an increase in the customs duties.

Troyes, a hosiery centre where unemployment had been rife for years, soon achieved a new prosperity when a handful of German Jews transferred a part of this industry from Voigtland, a district of Saxony, famous in the whole world for the manufacture of stockings, to France, bringing with them the valuable British market. By 1939 the capacity of the machines and looms had been outgrown and orders had to be postponed for six months to a year. The large Belgo-German firm of Lindemann soon established branches throughout France and North Africa under the well-known name of "Etam". A number of others, such as "Setamil" and "Selfix", introduced new types of rayon and special manufacturing processes for stockings, thus absorbing a considerable proportion of the unemployed in Paris (in 1937 Paris still had 200,000 registered unemployed, of whom 10 per cent were foreigners). In 1932, two small factories manufacturing rubber gloves and similar articles, the only two of the kind in France, were on the verge of bankruptcy. Foreigners planning their reorganisation were appalled at the lamentable state of the equipment, out-of-date, dangerous processes being

still in use although deleterious to the workpeople's health. It was finally decided to build new factories, and their products were eventually successful in competing with German goods on the world markets. A Leipzig shaving-brush firm of high repute transferred the whole of its equipment to a small village in the Seine-et-Oise area, and was soon giving employment to many inhabitants of the neighbouring villages.

The British were quicker in seizing the opportunity of attracting new industries, since to a certain extent they depended, as did the French, on Germany for certain articles. Britain, however, was more cautious or less prodigal than France in her welcome to immigrants from Europe, for the French, in a spirit of boundless magnanimity, had at first, like the Dutch, allowed all these unfortunates unrestricted entry. Britain only accepted those better situated, who had definite plans to submit, but once accepted the British did everything possible to ensure these plans being well carried out to the mutual benefit of the country and the immigrants. Britain had even once succeeded in importing, lock, stock and barrel, a large button factory of world-wide repute from Hanover, with all the skilled labour as well; considering Nazi watchfulness and careful control this was a real master stroke. Britain and Holland also absorbed a large proportion of the Berlin-Dönhofsplatz clothing manufacturers. A few of these found their way to Paris and, if not driven out by the Government's short-sighted policy or frightened by the difficult working conditions and the French lack of understanding for the importance of exports, set themselves up in the IX *arrondissement*, in the Gare de l'Est and the Gare du Nord area. The wireless industry, especially the manufacture of accessories, also attracted numbers of these foreigners.

Modern shops with attractive fronts soon began to make their appearance along the boulevards and in the main shopping centres in Paris; they belonged for the most part to foreigners who were to prove more successful than the Russians. While these had been easily disheartened, the newly arrived Central Europeans were not so quickly discouraged, and continued their efforts to modernise the commercial aspect of the capital, which, under their influence, changed considerably between 1930 and 1940.

One of the most attractive innovations was the exclusive "invisible" shop window, offering a deceptive display to tempt the passer-by and attract the loiterer, because those lovely shoes or that exquisite, fine leatherwork of the Austrian firm Lederer seemed open to the touch, but a groping hand would find the

goods were protected by a concave, almost invisible sheet of glass and had, after all, to be purchased inside the shop. The creator of this type of show-window had tried for years to have his invention, already popular in Central Europe, America and Britain, accepted in France.

The new, sumptuously appointed foreign shops were quick to adopt—and it is a great temptation to add “needless to say”—this innovation. It was soon clear that the reserve and conservatism of the French business man, qualities which were presented to the new arrivals in the form of immutable axioms, could not withstand the irresistible impetus given to the commercial life of Paris by the enthusiasm and dash of the foreign newcomers, essentially more modern than the French in outlook and a more active factor, since they were not in a position to rest on an old-established but now out-dated reputation. For the French shopkeepers were soon imitating these attractive examples and transforming their sombre, old-fashioned shops into models of modern showrooms. Some of the landlords began to take a pride in this modernisation and went as far as agreeing to their tenants’ request to paint the fronts, which constituted an unheard-of revolution in Parisian habits, since the majority of the houses in the capital appeared never to have been repainted since they were built.

While the Russians in the years just after the war were attracted in the main to the west side of the capital, the successive ways of better-class emigrants from Central Europe concentrated their business activities round the Place de la République and more especially the Gare de l’Est and Gare du Nord districts. The rue d’Hauteville, already before the last war a popular centre for European traders, now attracted more and more of those elements, especially Poles, Czechoslovaks, Austrian and Germans, to whom France became indebted for no small part of her increase in exports. They brought with them many of the smaller industries which had previously been an almost exclusive German monopoly. They soon became the chief sources of supply for the big stores, which were obliged to restrict their imports from Central Europe. They also obtained good positions as agents for French firms whenever these were far-sighted enough to take advantage of the opportunity of employing people with a thorough knowledge of the European markets.

Beautiful furs have always seemed the natural attribute of every elegant Parisienne of the nobility or upper classes, and been the dream wish not only of the New York “lovelies” and the *midinettes* round the Madeleine, but also of the woman of

the *petite bourgeoisie* and the workman's wife. The realisation of such a dream, however, was made difficult by the insurmountable obstacle of price, fantastically high compared with Central Europe. The international market had been almost entirely in the hands of German and Polish Jews in Leipzig. These shrewd furriers proved to Hitler, just as the diamond craftsmen had formerly proved to Isabella, that they were a power independent of place. It only took them, in fact, a few years to succeed in reducing the Leipzig market to a mere name and to set up their trade, mainly in London, the commercial centre for a world empire, but in Paris as well. Here they popularised furs, making them accessible to every taste and purse. These furriers, in close co-operation with London, soon formed a strong commercial group centred in the tiny, narrow streets between the rue du Faubourg Poissonnière and the rue d'Hauteville.

The strong smell of the dried skins or those ready prepared and piled in thousands of small, hastily arranged workrooms seemed very remote from the exquisite perfume of the fine silky furs later on show in the attractive window displays of the new shops along the main boulevards. A few years later all Paris was wearing furs, now become popular, and the little *midinettes* not only worked on them, as their clever hands had done for generations, but could buy them themselves without waiting for the "Monsieur" to make a gift in return for their longing smile.

Cultured pearls spoiled the pearl market after the war and started a general fashion for imitation jewellery. It was "the thing" to wear "imitation" everywhere, part and parcel of the irruption of "primitive" semi-negro culture into Europe, with its far-reaching influence on painting and music. The main centre for this industry had always been Gablonz in Czechoslovakia, with practically a monopoly of the international market. A few cautious manufacturers had already set themselves up in Paris before Munich, but they began to pour in from 1938 onwards and found the circumstances no obstacle to the transplantation of their trade. They succeeded, with admirable resourcefulness, in creating a new centre in a very short time, and their products were improved and refined by the French atmosphere, which gave them an added charm and toned down their gaudy over-ornate style.

The rôle of agent, that indispensable "salt" of commercial life, particularly suited many of these emigrants. With the travellers and commission men they haunted from an early hour the many *cafés* and *bistrotts* near the salerooms in the rue Drouot, where the public auctions attracted Central European



art dealers in increasing numbers. If they were not immediately recognised as foreigners from their smarter and better-groomed appearance, the French being in general more careless of externals (there was nothing unusual in an extremely fashionably dressed woman in Paris being escorted by a very slovenly man), no mistake could be made on catching sight of a brief-case tucked under their arm, a typically Central European habit, but most unusual in Paris, where even barristers on their way to the Courts carried their dossiers (the pages are not even stitched and numbered as is usual in Berlin) carelessly in their hands. These agents, with contacts throughout the world, since their former connections had by now migrated all over the earth, were always living in the hope of the *grand coup*: of finding the money for "an invention which would revolutionise the whole market". They were not easily discouraged, and if one of them felt a bit disheartened, the others would hasten to remind him of the famous case of the poor man who had failed for a long time to interest anyone in the Photomaton idea or the new Bagatelle game, but who did finally succeed and made millions. This stroke of good fortune pursued them in their troubled minds like an Arabian Nights story, as they sat for hours on end discussing fantastic plans over a *crème*.

It did not take them long to discover the inveterate mania of the French for a gamble of any kind, and some instinctively felt that an organised exploitation of this vice would be profitable. There were just a few very ordinary penny machines in the *bistrot*s, which put them on the right track. The very latest thing in American and Swiss machines were soon imported and installed in every *bistrot*, and the whole of Paris began passionately "fishing" in these machines for a lighter or cigarette-case. It is an unhealthy trade, which leads almost automatically to "racket" and "gang", and the French and foreign "parasites", their machines more often than not doctored, enticed the pennies from the Parisian workers' pockets. Typically enough, big industrialists gave their support to this unhealthy craze as long as there was one spot still left in France for one of their machines, which, by a very ingenious system, brought them the bulk of the profits. But as soon as the small business men and those with a limited income had invested their capital, the wealthier were the first to complain loudly about the scandal, compelling the Government, in 1938, immediately to prohibit, from one day to another, the use of these machines. Originally quite expensive, they suddenly became useless. This was the moment for which the makers had been waiting. They now bought back the

machines, naturally at a ridiculously low figure, in the expectation that under their pressure the Government would be compelled to lift the ban. This was typical of their methods, not only used in industry but prevalent also in politics. It was the very same people who attacked the Left Wing parties in Briand's time for their attempts at closer relations with the Weimar Republic and then later solicited for collaboration with the dictators on bended knee, declaring through Flandin as spokesman that the democratic capitalist system could well exist side by side with that of Hitler, Mussolini and Japan. It was the same people who descended to the most abject means to undermine and sully the Popular Front, only to boast afterwards that they had always said "it was no good". It was the same people who began the campaign against the "undesirables" and later against the "workers without country" and Fifth Column dangers, who were to give in only too willingly at the first attack and betray the country and even their own interests for a short precarious survival ruinous for France. With their narrow-minded class and caste consciousness they recognised only one god—money, of which the smell does not betray the origin.

They were quick to take advantage of the proposal to introduce into the national economy an institution entirely foreign to the French spirit and the system of production and consumption, based on small undeveloped factories, skilled craftsmen, the old-style shopkeeper and a peasantry forming about 55 per cent as against approximately 45 per cent urban population—the one-price store.

Everything spoke against the establishment of such stores in a country so strongly opposed to uniformity and standardisation in taste—the ravages inflicted on the economy of the countries where they were first started, the furious attacks levelled against them in the United States and pre-Hitler Germany in spite of both these countries being highly industrialised and ripe for this type of monopolisation of everyday articles, and above all, it was thought, the inherent opposition of the French to any exhibition of false, cheap elegance. Yet established they were—and with great success.

Was Ford right? Can a need be artificially "created" by producing the requisite goods, as he proved with his cars? Or were the organising talents of the German Jews who had made "Karstadt" in Germany such a flourishing, ultra-modern store, so highly developed that they could quickly transform the classic appearance of the country with a little rouge and power *à prix-unic*?

One thing is sure: the big stores which quickly realised the advantage of having a market for their inferior goods in these one-price stores, and therefore encouraged their spread, had no reason to complain. The "Printemps" had an interest in the "PriSunic" (a fancy name derived from "Prix-Unic") and received 20 per cent of the profits merely for having made their establishment possible; the "Société pour l'Achat en Commun", created by a group of these stores to be their common "buyer", received 5 per cent commission, and the other big stores, connected with other "Prix-Unics," as "Uniprix," "Monoprix" or "Unifix", were no worse off. There was hardly a town a few years later in France or North Africa without one or more one-price store. First the crowds huddled at the entrance to these stuffy hives, whence the sweet and somewhat sickly smell of hot waffles enchanted and deadened their senses as though a high priest were preparing for the ritual of purchase, and then, once inside, the attractive counters with their comprehensive display of practical but rather vulgar and standardised articles, seemed to meet the little man's every need. Had the people really changed so much, or was it merely bitter reality and the slump which made them forget the so rightly recognised French taste and culture and become these stores' most faithfully regular customers, so that the hot, popular atmosphere of these one-price stores, with the continuous meandering crowds, seemed to form part of modern Paris and even slowly to acquire a native air? It was often said that Communism in Russia grafted on to a semi-feudal system could not succeed because one link in the chain of normal evolution, liberal capitalism, had been skipped. What the will of man, intent on abolishing the exploitation of man, can create in less than one generation against the fiercest opposition from international capitalism, had to wait to be revealed to the world on the huge Russian battlefields, proving clearly the poverty of mankind's imagination and judgment, which, it would seem, have never throughout the course of history succeeded in recognising the brilliance of a people's performance unless it takes place amidst fire and bloodshed.

French economy, a century out of date, offered the same contradictions during the rapid spread of the "Prix-Unics", with the same surprising result, as though economic theories in general and their application to France were wrong, or the accepted definition of the French soul was out of date and no longer corresponded to the true aspirations of the nation, and that the foreigners, the *chez-nous*-ites with their keen greyhound instincts and alert judgment, cold and uncompromising, had better under-

stood the real needs of an economy in transformation.

Their influence on the general structure of French economy was soon so great, since the small manufacturers and craftsmen were dependent to a great extent on the large stores (almost in the same way as in the old days under a different economic and social system the peasants depended upon the monks in the monastery or the serfs on the Lord of the Manor), that the same story was repeated as in Germany. A pretence was made for propaganda purposes, just as the Nazis did under the Weimar Republic, to safeguard the interests of the small business by special legislation, since it was clear from the start that any such laws would be powerless against the big combines and the interests of a sacred system.

It was besides the very people who were benefiting, and only they, who inveighed the loudest and most hypocritically in the Chamber of Deputies against this pitilessly logical expression of the innate forces of modern capitalism with its tendency to group, rationalise, collectivise and swallow up the weakest links in any system, like an unnatural monster devouring its young. Those who knew what they were doing and what they wanted were not inspired in this demagogic agitation by fear of Marxism, which anticipates just such an inevitable development towards the monopolistic concentration of industrial enterprise, but with the aim of diverting the mounting fury of the people and more especially in the private and materialist hope of obtaining hold later of a fat heritage, following the example of Hermann Goering, who, with the accumulation of numerous big factories in his name, has carried out his own pseudo-“socialisation”.

The complete assimilation of the new one-price stores within French economy made it abundantly clear that all preconceived notions about the unchangeable spirit of a people resisting every effort to influence were, at least as far as externals go, worthless and could not withstand an economic onslaught which would inevitably, sooner or later, leave its mark. But it also showed in France the discrepancy between the old tired carcass of the economic structure and the real needs of the masses. These needs were clearly manifest at the very moment when the industrial magnates superimposed on an obsolete structure a rational organisation, though in an incomplete and artificial fashion, entirely in their own interests to obtain increased profits; but they thus appeared to reduce the cost of living by organised purchase and sale and as a result to increase the buying power and general welfare of the public as a whole, which responded with the spontaneity of a reflex action. The lowering of standards

in taste, which would appear a regrettable but inherent consequence, is not really the result of this centralisation but the direct outcome of greed for profit, and is only tolerated, not chosen, by the people, who give the lie every day to the argument proclaimed from the housetops by Hollywood film producers as they crowd the market with abominably bad films (mainly because those are cheap to produce) that this is "what the people want".

The foreign founders of the "Prix-Unic" lost the millions they invested in French economy which they enriched and invigorated. Their incomes were later shared by their former partners, both French and German. Because of their blind faith in capitalism, although they had already been driven out once by their German associates (since the capitalist always sacrifices the weakest link, and here this link was the German Jews) no warning voice could prevent them from seeking a new partnership, this time with French capitalists, who in turn promptly let them down. When pity is felt, as felt it must be, for the innocent victims of Fascism in France, these people can no more rouse compassion than a manure heap which fulfils its function by fertilising the ground in autumn ready for the spring sowing.

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CHAPTER VI

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## THE FILM IN FRANCE

FRANCE, which had a credit balance before 1914 because she invested capital abroad, often for political reasons, could not employ the same methods after the war. The reasons for this change were partly the wish to weaken rather than help her old clients, the Russians, for example, for capitalist motives far removed from any real national policy and the true interests of the people, and partly the exhaustion of her finances, too restricted to allow her still to play the part of banker to Europe. After the war, however, a different type of import was developed, invisible but continuously on the increase, until just before the great European crisis, and particularly apparent during the magnificent Paris exhibition: tourism. It brought France millions of francs every year through a variety of channels. The attraction of the battlefields, the mystery of the *Tranchées des Baïonnettes*, the legend of the heroic resistance at Fort Douaumont, immortalised

by the famous inscription on the Verdun monument, *On les aura*, the silent cellars along the Chemin des Dames, were all transformed by organised commercial exploitation, scarcely respectful to the peace of these heroes, who continued after their death to serve their country or rather those who had seized hold of this word for material or selfish reasons, into regular annuities destined to reduce the Budget deficit.

The tourist traffic was so flourishing that the Russian and other emigrants found the hotels full and prosperous. After the 1929 depression these same hotels were the first to feel the effect of the decrease in this "invisible emigration", since the flood of Americans had dried up.

When the first refugees from Germany and Central Europe arrived in 1933 they nearly all first made their way to Paris. A crowd of 50,000 could not replace the hundreds of thousands of tourists, but there can be no doubt that they did help to fill the hotels and bring back an atmosphere of activity and prosperity. The hotels round the Champs Elysées and along the main boulevards, nearly all empty and facing bankruptcy, seized this opportunity of making money again. Cafés, restaurants and the *boîtes de nuit* felt that the world's centre of pleasure had again gravitated from Berlin to Paris, which for the moment witnessed a revival of the 1926 boom. The Champs Elysées area was a particular favourite with the exiles from the film and stage world, who flocked from the morning onwards to the "Fouquet" and the "Colisée". Many of them were unable to adapt themselves to the "talkies", at that moment still in the experimental stage and far from firmly established; bad debts and outright swindles, reaching a peak with the Pathé-Natan scandal and bankruptcy, had given the sound-film in Paris a bad reputation.

Similar to other emanations of French culture, the film had up to that time produced some brilliant examples of its potential talent; whilst the bulk of production, not at any time large, rivalled Hollywood in frivolous trivialities of the "Made in France" stamp, intended mainly for export, and thus gave widespread credence to the picture of a decadent France given over entirely to the vulgar pleasures of love and the stomach.

As early as 1930 Berlin had begun making great efforts, to a certain extent successfully, to outstrip Hollywood in world production. Later events proved beyond dispute that those actors who later became *émigrés* had been responsible for the extensive progress made by the German film.

German actors, however, soon gave up the attempt to create

a position for themselves in the French film world. Language difficulties, rivalry and jealousy among the stars, the short-sighted official policy and the limited production capacity proved insurmountable obstacles, but they were later to prove in Britain and America that they were not only good actors in their own country but definitely talented. Nearly all the well-known German film-stars of the time of the Weimar Republic have to-day earned no mean fame after having won recognition for their talents in spite of the foreign surroundings, the rivalry of American stars and the language difficulty. The German colony—and it is not true that the majority are Jews—in the film world now exercises a great influence in Hollywood, whether authors, scenario writers, composers or actors. Names such as Max Reinhardt, Friedrich Holländer, Marlene Dietrich, Conrad Veidt, Elisabeth Bergner, Albert Basserman, Oskar Homolka and Anton Walbrook appeared increasingly often in first-class productions. Even Felix Bressart, after years of failure, succeeded in adapting his typical Berlin humour to the requirements of the American film, while Kosterlitz has the credit for having discovered Deanna Durbin. This transformation and adaptation, it is true, took a fairly long time, but the result proved beyond dispute that it was they who had given the German film its well-merited reputation. The truth of this is made more emphatically clear by the fact that before the war Goebbels failed, in spite of numerous attempts, to make a single film worthy of world applause, and this was in no way due to world-boycotting which, in this industry as in the others, never passed the stage of protests in tumultuous mass-meetings.

The French celebrities, the majority of whom, moreover, remained in France, since it was not a question of Jewish but purely political emigration, are to-day following the same road from Damascus to Hollywood. However, they seem to be getting there more quickly than the German refugees, for the names of René Clair, Duvivier, Paul Renoir, Michèle Morgan, Jean Gabin, not to mention Charles Boyer, have appeared more and more frequently in recent productions.

While the German actors were a failure in Paris, the Jewish producers from Central Europe began slowly but surely to extend a predominant influence on the French film. Outstanding international successes, such as *La Grande Illusion*, with Stroheim, or *Prison sans Barreaux*, with Corinne Luchaire, are due to them. Corinne Luchaire, discovered and launched by a German Jew, retained her predilection for the gentlemen on the other side of the Rhine and chose to show her gratitude by becoming the

mistress of General Schaumburg, the butcher of Paris; while her father, Jean Luchaire, was reduced to the ignominious rôle of *tenir le chandelier*.

These Jewish producers either founded their own production units or joined French companies, which they completely reorganised. If there were a few like Max Glass, who simply translated bad German military films into French and found, to his great surprise, that they were extremely successful, filling the cinemas to bursting-point as they had done in Germany: if others favoured the frivolous type of film for export for purely financial reasons, the majority made every effort, and with success, to continue the tradition of the good French psychological and social film. Their influence was particularly useful in giving French film production the one thing it lacked—good internal organisation; they procured the necessary funds on credit long before beginning the film and met their later liabilities. Such exceptions as the flight of the Polish Jew naturalised American, Nebenzahl, whose Société Néro had previously produced excellent films in Berlin and Paris before going bankrupt, only proved the rule.

Since the French economic structure was too narrow for the wider scope of their ideas, normally attracted towards foreign markets, they were soon obliged to make serious efforts to win a place for themselves on the international market. It was, in fact, they who popularised the good French film abroad, while remaining in the background and leaving unchanged the typically French character of the production.

It was significant that the Russians were building the new modern cinemas in Paris and the provinces, preferring only to deal with the finished product, which assured them a regular profit and a slow but sure return on the money invested; while the German refugees, bolder and more enterprising, were throwing themselves into production, where they risked the whole of their savings, but might make millions in the event of success. It was, in any case, true that the Russians and the Central Europeans, each in their own way, contributed greatly to the development of the film industry in France. They were not repaid in the same coin.

French capitalists played the same game in this industry as in the others. When restrictions against foreigners were beginning to come into force in 1938, they succeeded in ousting their foreign rivals and seizing the fruits of their work. From one day to another, as almost always such decisions are taken in France, foreigners were suddenly prohibited in a more or less direct



fashion from taking part as authors, scenario writers, musicians, actors or producers in film production. It only remained for Vichy later to enlarge upon this policy without having to take the trouble of inventing it.

Such lack of recognition for the good services rendered by these foreigners, who were heart and soul for France, characterised this reactionary period, from 1937 onwards, under the direction of Daladier, who was seeking the indulgence of the Right Wing parties.

Since at this same period Hitler was paying well his "indirect" agents, i.e. the ordinary spies, and even better his "direct" agents, i.e. the French intellectuals sold out to Goebbels (after the disaster some of them boasted even of their "intelligence" work with a cynicism rarely surpassed), the expression *travailler pour le roi de Prusse*, or for nothing, became particularly out of place and was quickly parodied, with a sad and resigned shrug of the shoulders, by these refugee film people, inspired with a sincere desire to help France, into *travailler pour la France*.

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CHAPTER VII

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## THE LIBERAL PROFESSIONS

FROM the time of the Medicis France had attracted foreign intellectuals in the widest sense of the word, from professors of medicine and artists to statesmen. It is interesting to note that the latter occasionally succeeded in acquiring great power, invariably at difficult periods, in time of war or civil disturbance. This is the more remarkable as the French have always shown a certain reserve, even sometimes a lack of appreciation for the manifestation of a foreign spirit, and always tried to belittle their influence and effect on the development of their culture, considerably enriched and varied by the colourful impress of these many foreign elements which were slowly adopted and absorbed during the course of the centuries. Reaction, therefore, against these "usurpers" was always violent.

The Italian favourite in the time of Marie de Medici was hanged by the feet by the young Louis XIII himself (although the official version will have him killed by the captain of the Guard) not so long after the Italian confidant of another Mary was stabbed in the mists of Scotland. Mazarin, during the reign of another foreign queen—and it is not perhaps mere chance

that the only queens to play an outstanding part in French affairs were foreigners, Catherine and Marie de Medici, Anne and Marie Antoinette of Austria—only escaped the same fate because he had the foresight to leave a safety valve for the people's anger, which was only later under Louis XVI to become a dangerous weapon, the right to sing satirical verse. The two Bonapartes were both abandoned by the French peasantry at a moment when such help would have saved them from disaster.

Only General Weygand, this high-born Belgian (whispers about his relationship to Leopold II were often heard in France) was enabled at the most fatal moment in French history to lose the country and the nation and then calmly to retire to the Côte d'Azur to write his memoirs. Perhaps he will try to justify why, according to him, an imaginary "Communist danger" was worth the risk of sacrificing his "second country". The danger of his attempt of self-justification was less "imaginary" than is generally thought by the general public in Britain and America. There are, in fact, "influential" circles who have completely forgiven him just because of the "Communist danger", Goebbels' classic and effective bogey. They even dreamed of getting him at a given moment to play the rôle of "Papa Pétain", especially after the Nazis did him the great service of arresting him. A late arrest by the Vichy crowd or the Gestapo can never be accepted as a delayed justification of former crimes. As the revolution consumed its devotees, so Fascism, this pseudo-revolution for blackguards and failures, did the same. To have been arrested by Robespierre did not prove innocence of having ever been "Montagnard" or "Jacobin" or "Girondin". Such an arrest merely meant that Robespierre distrusted the victim, who was quickly declared either a "traitor", or "bought", or "an enemy agent". This same proceeding, formerly common in Bolshevik Russia and Hitler's Germany, was adopted of necessity in the France of the "Vichy National Revolution". To have been arrested by Vichy before 1942 could at a pinch be quoted as proof that the faint-hearted, or those functionaries who had fallen into the trap of veneration for Pétain, had come to themselves and thus became suspect in the eyes of the "Camarilla" of the Hôtel du Parc. To have been arrested after 1942, when it was clear to everyone that the Nazi beast was cornered, could only be regarded in most cases as proof of the weakness of character, lack of ingenuity and amoral cynicism of the "Marshal's fervent adherents", political blackguards in other words, or, as was often the case, just plain blackguards. The rats who as a last resort left the slave galley, now shipwrecked after listing

with every wind, and succeeded in swimming as far as Algiers, ought certainly not for that reason to have found a coach-and-pair waiting to take them straight to office, where everything has been whitewashed, even their names.

If the fame of these foreigners and their value to France, however contested that might be, speak for themselves, the other type, the men of science and the arts, contributed far more to the development of French culture and especially to its world-wide repute, by pacific means and not through the "Grande Armée" (which has filled history books with innumerable pages of wonderful feats, holding schoolchildren breathless—for they are scarcely taught that exhaustion was all that was left to France). These eminent foreigners have made such a clearly defined impression on the spirit of the people that the foreign origin, hidden under his French name, of this or that great man is often forgotten.

Professor Strowski, whose grandfather was Polish, had to recall these facts in 1938, when hatred of foreigners was roused to fever heat, and he produced a long list, from Gambetta to Mme Curie (who proudly hyphenated her own name of Sklodowska to that of her husband), not forgetting Victor Hugo, whose mother was Italian, nor Savorgnan de Brazza, nor Camille Pissaro, born of Spanish-Jewish parents on the Danish island of St. Thomas in the Antilles, and regretting that Igor Stravinsky because of his Russian origin was to seek in vain a seat in the Academy.

Intellectuals everywhere have always considered the spiritual welfare of France as the common good of humanity, and have done everything possible to further its development, inspired by their inherent feeling and love for French culture, which often became their guide and beacon.

The highest expression of the world's recognition and gratitude for this spiritual radiance in the world of science, where all nations are inter-dependent and knowledge is not confined within narrow national boundaries, but is essentially reciprocal, was the presentation of the Pasteur Institute, raised entirely by gifts and endowments from abroad and given to France on condition that men of science throughout the world should have the right to continue their work there. This Institute, by sending serum to every corner of the globe, has done more for the renown of France than Napoleon's conquest of Europe by violence could ever have achieved.

For many years the Institute was the centre for scientific research and discoveries affecting the welfare of humanity as a

whole. Many foreign scholars went from it imbued with French methods and culture, the inspiring radiance of which they took back to their native countries. The period before the Great War was characterised by the high standard of the Sorbonne, as well as the Collège de France and the Haute Ecole des Sciences Politiques et Economiques, other citadels of French intellectual genius and a humanist, liberal spirit.

This spirit, like the country's economic foundations, could not fail to be affected by the change and the threats to the whole European economic structure after Versailles. A narrow isolationist spirit of nationalism spread through the Sorbonne, especially the Faculty of Medicine, which made vehement protests against the admission of foreign doctors into France. The liberal spirit of the nineteenth century had found it reasonable enough for a doctor holding a French diploma to have the right to practise medicine in France. The liberal profession could afford the luxury of this gesture, made possible by economic circumstances, because very few foreign students took advantage of this right, since they were always anxious to return to their own countries, where the prestige of a French degree would ensure them a good practice.

This spirit survived for some considerable time after the war. Many foreign doctors and dentists, especially Russians and Rumanians, were thus enabled to set up in France and even attain a certain renown. For instance, a Russian Officer of the Legion of Honour was for many years dentist to Daladier and his family.

But this narrow-minded nationalist spirit was soon to affect not only the Faculty of Medicine, but also the Faculty of Law, thus reflecting the contraction in the liberal profession's standard of living with the progress of the depression. In spite of the sometimes tumultuous opposition of the students, who were no longer demonstrating on the Boul' Mich' on behalf of the "Rights of Man", but brawling with razor blades on the side of the *Action Française*, Charles Maurras' paper, against the *Droit de Vivre*, the paper representing the "Anti-racial League" of the intrepid Bernard Lecache (who, liberated from a Vichy camp in North Africa, has again taken up his fight in an unbroken spirit), France welcomed a number of exiled scholars, from Germany even and Central Europe, and procured them posts in the Universities, as for instance was the case with the mathematician and courageous anti-Nazi Gumbel in Lyons. Gumbel had been fortunate enough to escape the fate which in 1933 overtook Professor Lessing, barbarously assassinated in Karlsbad by

Hitler's orders. Naturalised French just before the war, Gumbel managed after the fall of France to escape to America.

The first restrictions regarding foreigners working in France, which meant the first break-away from the liberal system of free competition, were introduced during the last war in 1917. They did not forbid foreigners to work without permission as they did later on—far from it. They tended rather to prevent employers enticing foreign workers from other factories because the shortage of labour had naturally brought about such bad practices. At that time every workman was a precious possession whose retention was jealously guarded, even with the aid of the law.

The first restrictions enforced in France after the war concerned the liberal professions, no foreigners being allowed to practise without special permission. The same classes of people, inspired by rivalry and jealousy, who had applauded Hitler's first anti-Semitic pogroms in Germany, now supported similar measures in France in the hope of reducing competition. The number of doctors affected by the Armbruster decree was so small, since the majority of foreign doctors fulfilled the conditions, having served in the Allied armies, that it had clearly been voted by the Chamber merely as a "sop" to appease the howling mob of Fascist students. This feeling of admiration for the totalitarian system, and especially for Mussolini, since Hitler could not yet be openly admired (although a small number of students, followers of Doriot and Déat and volunteer members of the French Anti-Bolshevist Legion, disgraced the honour and renown of France by doing this very thing), came openly to the fore during the Abyssinian War. Professor Jèze, though somewhat of a reactionary himself, was not acceptable in their eyes because he had dared to act as legal adviser to the Negus at the Council of the League of Nations in Geneva. Their demonstrations prevented him for several days from carrying on his lectures on public law. Guernut, Radical-Socialist minister with Left Wing tendencies, a fine man and a fearless opponent of Hitler and of the French Fascists until his death in 1943, wished to take strong action, but the Cabinet compelled him to give in. The Democrats' well-known shortcoming, their weakness in handling agitators if they were Right Wing, was evident once more and again won the day.

Guernut, against his better judgment, bound by the decision of his colleagues, was obliged to refuse to let the police enter the Sorbonne and closed the University, because the Cabinet wanted to "pacify" the openly Fascist movement of these

students in revolt. Having failed in this attempt at appeasement which had been forced upon him, Guernut could find no other alternative for his democratic conscience than to resign and thus give the Fascists an outstanding victory.

The increasingly reactionary spirit prevalent among a large number of doctors and lawyers in France, especially in Paris, prevented any substantial help being given to exiled intellectuals. France did not make it a point of honour to emulate the good example set by Britain, who permitted over two hundred foreign doctors to set up in practice after having passed British examinations. The good services, however, of chemists, engineers and inventors, who could be profitable to industry, were used, often when expedient, without their having to complete the normal administrative formalities. As a result of their uncertain position they were often shamelessly exploited. They scarcely ever complained, since they were satisfied with permission to help in the struggle against Hitler.

Many brought the specifications with them for the manufacture of weapons and gases, as well as the plans of armament factories and the Ruhr dams, which were never touched by the French Air Force, inoperative until the invasion of Holland, and were only later bombed (with the help possibly of these plans?) by the R.A.F.

On the other hand, the few dozen doctors who were compelled for financial reasons to attempt to carry on a practice among the other refugees were constantly denounced by the French professional associations and were treated severely. Not one escaped conviction and all ended in the concentration camp. The darkness of reaction descended over France, long before the little flame which was still flickering and throwing a wan light on the last vestiges and feeble remains of tolerance and freedom was brutally and abruptly extinguished by the Nazi boot, the gloss of which, brilliant thanks to the polish and loving care expended by would-be ultra-Nationalist French lackeys, was the only light "officially" authorised.

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## CHAPTER VIII

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### *THE "PAPIER TIMBRE" COMPLEX*

THE national character often appears strangely disguised and it is sometimes difficult to distinguish it under its varied forms. Yet

it can be discovered or exposed by one single characteristic, just as on a dark, stormy day a flash of lightning will illumine some hidden cleft of country, revealing for a moment its true shape. Man in his dreams subconsciously desires the things which nature has denied him. In the same way nations aspire by contradiction to complete their defective soul and thus often express in emotional and intellectual outpourings the opposite of their inherent feelings and thoughts. The figures the people create in popular stories and songs express perhaps best the primitive and sincere nature of their creators, since they are born of fantasy at a time long ago, nearer to subconscious, instinctive man, not then deformed. They are often the product of the fear that a bad characteristic may dominate the future development of the community. Siegfried's substitution for Gunther, Hagen's treachery, Kriemhild's desire for revenge, make the Germanic peoples shudder with shame, because they suspect that these characteristics are their own, which they have tried to repudiate during the course of history without success. That is why the road to Canossa has always made a great impression on the German mind as the supreme example of victory over pretentious ambition and of humiliating submission. Barbarossa always appears to them, in their despairing state of national dismemberment and powerlessness to achieve unity and peace at home and abroad, as a symbol and guide and Messiah, regrettably incarcerated with his red beard in the depths of the earth and thus leaving the way free on earth for false Messiahs.

Luther, who was a cause for over a century of wars of religion, by a strange paradox in France first and only several decades later in Germany, is less a man protesting against the corruption of church customs and aspiring to direct contact between the creature and the Creator than the personification of the eruptions of the Germanic soul in its attempt to burst through the thin veneer of romanisation to seek its salvation in the union of religion and State (Anglo-Saxon Britain alone of the great European countries underwent the same reaction, raising the King to the Head of the Church) by making the latter increasingly dominant until there emerges Hitler as "Supreme Judge", precisely because the German soul is weak, impressionable, mystic and incapable of seeking the way of salvation without a "Führer". Hagen's horrid figure haunted the imagination of the aged Hindenburg, when he coined the best possible slogan to assure his victory in the Reich's Presidential elections against Hitler, "*Die Treue ist das Mark der Ehre*" (Loyalty is the essence of honour), only to betray a few months later for selfish

and material ends both his honour and his nation.

Roland's heroic gesture to perish at Roncevaux where he stood steadfast to cover the retreat, his horn calling in vain for help, is the magnificent symbol of the soul of France, because the people cannot forget that Vercingetorix, in spite of his intrepid defence, was taken as a prisoner to Rome. Always in her history France has found a hero who first stood alone, imbued with this example, from Jeanne d'Arc to Gambetta and Clémenceau. But these saviours could not make the French forget the cruel treachery of the Duc de Bourbon before the Battle of Pavia, where the "King Knight" Francis I lost "all except honour"; the famous "overthrow of alliances" under Louis XV, when he changed sides and instead of the ally of Frederick II against Maria Theresa became the enemy of Prussia and the friend of Austria (a similar change of front occurred in Russia during the same Seven Years War, calling to mind a comparison with the present time, when Hitlerite Germany and Stalin's Russia, with an eye on security, shared Poland while Britain and France indirectly supported Finland against Russia, and then Russia and the people of Poland, if not the Government, and Britain fought as allies against Germany, while Vichy France, losing everything, especially honour, upheld Hitler and sent the Anti-Bolshevik-Legion to fight in Russia, these many changes taking place at a kaleidoscopic rate); the betrayal by the Coblenz "nobles" who placed their class interests above those of their country, which they reconquered with the help of the "hereditary enemies"; the wavering of Mirabeau and some of the Revolution generals, delighting in intrigue and private scheming, a characteristic of French politicians and statesmen; still less can they forget the treachery of Bernadotte, the shameful surrender of Bazaine at Metz in order to use his army against the Paris "revolutionaries"; Thiers' appeal for help to Bismarck against the capital's patriot "communards", or, last but not least, Weygand's acceptance of defeat for fear of Communist riots in Paris.

No other nation in Europe has so many contradictory characteristics and variety in temperament as the French people, and in no other nation is there such discrepancy between the character and customs of the governing class and the people, each a revelation of the two Frances.

The purity of a Jeanne d'Arc, spirited daughter of the people; true as steel and faithful to the end before her French judges in the foreigner's pay, and at the stake, contrasts with the shameful perfidy of the Court at the time of Coligny's assassination and blood-stained St. Bartholomew's Night. Even this revered



daughter of the people faltered through "fear of fire" and recanted. She did not in her simplicity mumble her words as Pétain did later, but she branded for ever "the pitiful 'betrayal' to save my life"! (*la grande pitié de la "trahison" pour sauver ma vie*).

The unwavering heroism of the *Communards* and the courage of the *sansculottes* at Valmy gave emphasis to the eternal values of fierce resistance against slavery in any form and epitomised the inflexible desire for *Liberté, Liberté, Chérie* of a people who received in glacial silence at the Porte St. Antoine the occupying troops in 1815, while the ladies of the nobility in the Champs Elysées climbed on the Cossacks' horses in a delirium of mad joy. This incongruity and instability of character has left its mark on the French mind which, by contrast and to restrain itself from running away, has always elaborated *raisonnable* and "logical" laws and a complicated, sometimes sophisticated procedure.

Since the despotism of the nobles and the "royal prerogative" with its *lettres de cachet* had a long reign, the country longed for true justice and venerated the memory of a king like Philippe Auguste the Just. Because the Frenchman has been deprived of his rights for centuries, he learned to prize them very highly and became an inveterate "litigator". That is why the Frenchman can approve of Francis I repudiating the peace signed in captivity and undertaking long proceedings against Charles V regarding the validity of a promise given under duress. The *bourgeoisie* rid itself of the old system, that is of its external form, without rejecting its defects and weaknesses or discarding the disastrous pall of its institutions, or doing away with the abuses of a corrupt administration. The spirit of the old *Parlements* still haunted a class that had acquired its social position through a revolution, though with scant gratitude this is forgotten and denied; yet this class consciousness made the new *bourgeoisie* stand apart from the "people", who have climbed on to the barricades at least once in every generation to win back *their* Revolution and have never given up attacking "the other France" nor ceased to build "the true France". They tried to do this after the First Republic and then after a Second, and after the Third; now engaged in a death struggle, they will build the Fourth Republic.

As a servant often adapts the manners and customs of his master, being proud of and defending them against all critics, the French *bourgeoisie* on replacing the nobility began almost jealously to adopt its characteristics, further deformed by the

fervour of imitation. Their sense of justice, suppressed for generations, led them nevertheless to seek a substitute to act as a sop to satisfy the class rising up behind, the "proletariat", with its desire for equity as violent as their own had previously been. The substitute the *bourgeoisie* chose in France took the form of "legal proceedings", a network of laws and decrees which stupefied the mind and smothered natural law. Napoléon I had so well understood the desires of this class, which had upheld him to the end and which he had made predominant in the State, that he introduced the most important clause of all affecting the life and organisation of the whole nation—that a verbal undertaking could never be valid. This spirit of distrust and the desire for absolute legal proof, which made paternity cases unacceptable in law, created the custom of having everything "in writing", the result of which was the *esprit du papier timbré* (official stamped form complex). For a contract to be written was not sufficient; the law prescribed that it must be set out on paper provided by the Government, which not only raised a considerable amount in indirect tax by this method but influenced the citizen's every action by giving him a false feeling of security. He was to find only too quickly, should he later attempt, relying on his *papier timbré*, to pursue a defaulting debtor, that the State accepted no responsibility for the undertaking written thereon being legal, but had an interest only in the amount of the dues payable. This *papier timbré* complex, which made a ritual of filling in forms and reduced the matter itself to a mere side-show, swamped and deluded the Frenchman's brain, permeated the whole nation and brought into being a bureaucratic administration satisfied with piling up files without thought for the human side of the matter in hand, whether private or public. It was this spirit that made the people lose all feeling of responsibility and killed the officials' civic courage. It was this spirit that made the legislators in both the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate believe that everything necessary had been done after regulating the whole life of the nation by laws and the Government invested with special powers later doing the same by senseless decrees, while the life of the nation was in fact in a state of increasingly obvious confusion.

It was this spirit that engendered an atmosphere of dalliance and satisfaction resulting in the people being quickly lulled when an obstacle difficult to overcome was avoided by superficial compromise, giving the wished-for satisfaction by safeguarding the external form. It was this spirit that made the Popular Front think social progress could be achieved once the requisite laws

had been passed, making it overlook the real antagonist, the economic power. No other country has ever produced so many laws and decrees connected with the welfare of the people and never was the *Journal Officiel* so thick as under the Blum Government. But never had the same *Journal Officiel* more resembled a printing-press of *assignats*, these worthless banknotes of the Revolution, slowly decreasing the real value of the decrees by increasing the speed of their issue.

It was the same cowardly weakness and lack of resistance that prevented Pierre Laval from taking decisive action and made him prefer to deceive the people's representatives, the Chamber of Deputies (returned by the Popular Front), which scarcely eighteen months after coming to power betrayed the electors at the instigation of the weak and ambitious "sham bull" Edouard Daladier and the dangerous intriguer Camille Chautemps—who had personally promised to go to the country before overthrowing the "coalitions"—by supporting a reactionary Cabinet and later implicitly approving the surrender of Bordeaux, to end eventually by handing over the country almost legally, on July 10th, 1940, to the people of Vichy, satisfied that the rules of the parliamentary game had been more or less correctly observed.

An article by Professor Cassin in *France Libre* gave support to the wrong impression that the three leading personalities of the French parliamentary system had not had any hand in the execution of this Vichy *coup d'état* and that these "Constitutional Acts" were in any event illegal for the simple reason that Lebrun had not signed them in his capacity as President of the Republic.

It had become such a usual thing from the beginning of the century for false values to be put on a pedestal that the intention might well have been to save these "pillars" of the democratic system under the Third Republic, whose faults no one any longer dare criticise, especially after so much was made of the "protests" raised by the Presidents of the Chamber and Senate when Laval abolished the last remnants of the parliamentary system, which it so happened meant their own functions. They may possibly have already protested before, so that they should not be confused with those who had themselves thrown into prison at the right moment by the "Boche" so as to obtain a full pardon and as a result have the legitimate opportunity of proudly raising their heads and seeking new sinecures under whatever system may arise.

The "categorical imperative" at the present time is for every upright man to unmask these false values, even at the risk of

awakening painful memories, since it is only the steadfast decision to maintain a serene dignity, both sober and implacable, that can bring these vagaries to book.

In any event the Professor's idea is purely hypothetical and not justified by the facts.

A glance at the *Vichy Journal Officiel* would show that Jeanneney presided with his customary impartiality at the comedy of the Vichy National Assembly and that Herriot, far from voting against Pétain, chose the expedient of abstaining and then in a short but worthily typical speech even "hoped" that the "renovated" Republic promised by Laval would be more "social". It would further be noted that the legal two-thirds majority of deputies and senators was obtained and that no attempt was made to excuse the disgrace eternally to shame the Republic's "Parliament" by alleging constraint, since there were a few dozen deputies left (but only 34 Socialists, the Communists having been interned), who had the civic courage to vote against Laval; and there was after all the precedent of Bordeaux of 1870 and the Commune! But the *Journal Officiel* would also prove that Lebrun had signed his own death-warrant, like a sheep granted the honour of nominating both the slaughter-house and the butcher. It was his signature which—"formally"—hoisted Pétain at the head of the "French State" and thus made of him "the flag which covers contraband". Nevertheless the new so-called Vichy constitution did not lose its character of "contraband of the Republic" for a reason which the astute Laval (and in the first years after the *débâcle*, not only he) always tried hard to hide—the fact that the constitutional law of the Republic expressly forbids any change whatsoever in the "Republican form of government".

Those, however, who have for years been daily risking their lives have never felt any doubt whatsoever and emphasised from the very beginning in the underground papers of the Resistance that the constitutional law of the Third Republic will still remain the fundamental basis for the Fourth. Furthermore, they have stated categorically that this new Republic will not merely be "social" or "a controlled economy", but quite simply Socialist. They are fully aware that the schism between the people "for" and those "against" the Revolution of 1789 has for the last 150 years left deep wounds and scars in the soul of the nation; that this eternal struggle between the two Frances explains "much that is incomprehensible" in France and that it can often take a violent form, as for instance at the time of Munich: indeed Munich was nothing less than a duel between these two irrecon-

cilably hostile trends; it had to lead to Sedan in 1940 and then to Vichy versus Resistance, as Sadowa in 1866 had led to Sedan in 1870 and then to Versailles versus Commune.

The Resistance movement has never for a moment doubted that the National Liberation will be followed by the Social Liberation and that this time the "Grande Révolution" will be definitely won, not in a duel but a decisive battle, however serious the attempt a few generals may make to safeguard the interests of the 200 families with the help of conservative financial support from the capitalist world or a patched-up, whitewashed fanatical patriotism in the Maurras style, such attempts all having one object in common and all appearing under more or less the same social trade-mark—"Vichy-Résistant".

It was this *papier timbré* complex, too, which was really responsible for the Maginot line fixation—the satisfaction produced by a cement barrier behind which the people could be lulled to a false sense of security, just as their conscience was satisfied by a written statement on official paper without a thought being given to the legality of the claims made, not to mention the debtor's solvency. This attitude also appeared under another form, the most dangerous perhaps of all, the refusal to admit the existence of problems. Since the Frenchman has a great liking for elegant phrases, an excellent one was found to express this, "The Minister regrets he cannot consider . . ." (*Monsieur le Ministre n'accepte pas.*) This was the customary formula for refusing a request without giving reasons or even having read it. It was the "elegant" and easy way of avoiding having to face up to difficult situations or even having to face them at all.

This did not make the difficulties any less real, but they had for the moment been "hedged" by this "trick" which, like all the bad habits of the ruling classes, unfortunately contaminated the people as well. It was only necessary to say "I cannot consider such a point of view" and every problem vanished as though by conjurer's magic.

This mental attitude of the average Frenchman, which is different from but akin to the dangerous *Je m'enfoutisme* attitude, the *petit papier* mentality—to trust only the written agreement, the idea of *défensive morale*—being always morally on the defensive, was not changed by the stark reality of the disaster. Far from that, it had been conceived, developed and made ready for just such a horrible contingency.

Pétain, and all those who knew both what they wanted and what they were doing (and for a time almost the entire nation)

just simply "hedged" the material possibility of continuing the war. They "refused to consider" the idea. Their mental refusal was conditioned by another attitude, an inevitable corollary of the first, that of the faint-hearted refusing to accept the existence of problems in order to be better able "to accept the accomplished fact". This phrase, "the facts must be accepted", is interdependent with "the Minister regrets he cannot consider", the one being conditioned by, even an offshoot of the other mental attitude. Each can serve as an excuse for the other, and a suitable maxim can always be found for each; but it is essential to have the Government propaganda machinery and wireless available. Goebbels is not only a past master in this art, but has found faithful disciples in every country in the world.

In this way France (should one say the France of Pétain, or Laval, or Flandin, or Pucheu, or Vallin, or Peyrouton, or Noguès, or Darlan, or Giraud under the orders of Darlan, or Godefroy, or Robert, or 90 per cent of the French or 10 per cent of the French or the France of such other scum as Déat, Doriot, Bucard, etc., or a handful of French traitors or, with more justification, a nation deceived, stunned, prostrated, exploited?) "accepted" for some months, before rising again with the Resistance movement, almost every humiliation, defeat and disaster. Efforts are made to excuse the "people" as excuses are found for the Italian "people" or, with less success, for the German "people". For history, however, it will be France that acted, as it is Hitler who has for ever implicated Germany. The House of Valois was not "responsible" for St. Bartholomew, but France, just as it was France that drove the English out and not Jeanne d'Arc. Catherine de Medici and the Maid of Orleans, without France, considered as a symbolic entity and unity, would not have had any influence on the history of Europe. "Leaders" such as these, on the contrary, express either the true character of a people or its inhibited resentment, as a man's heroic act can be either the result of his courageous character or simply the reaction of an inhibited feeling of inferiority.

For this reason it might be said that dictatorships are virtually democratic in the demagogic sense, while the parliamentary democracies are totalitarian systems in the conservative sense. That is why in the modern history of capitalism only the democracies, with a Conservative Party in power, have functioned well, the system becoming "rotten" as soon as the people wanted to take over control, or that at least is what a bitter propaganda campaign immediately insinuated.

This baleful spirit of passivity degenerated into a criminal act when it refused even, through mortal lassitude, to occupy the defensive positions it had built, corresponding to the character of the people nourished on propaganda to retire mentally into themselves and politically to restrict their activities to "their own empire".

The *papier timbré* complex, creator of the Maginot line fixation, of pacifist "moral rearmament", the "don't care" attitude and the "hedging" of problems caused by the memory of the severe loss of blood suffered during the "First Germanic War" and the weak circulation of coagulated blood in a body enfeebled by arterio-sclerosis, could have been, adequate as it was from a physical, material and spiritual viewpoint, salutary even for the country, had it still had sufficient strength to exploit the "rights patent" of defensive policy, to stick to the "written agreement" and eventually fight for it. But it collapsed even before the first enemy attack as if the defensive fortresses were built, not of cement, but of the manifest expression of this spirit: the innumerable issues of the *Journal Officiel*.

The Central Europeans in France, whether in their private or commercial activities, came everywhere up against this *papier timbré* complex, both in the material sense and figuratively. Such methods, unknown anywhere in Europe, were entirely strange to them and they remained at first with mouths agape when landlords presented them with agreements drawn up on official dull yellow paper and containing innumerable clauses covering every imaginable contingency, even for perfectly straightforward leases or tenancies of merely a few weeks' duration, only to find later on that their calculations had all been quite useless, since new taxes and unexpected dues were immediately relegated to the tenant and added to the rent. They were still more surprised when, proudly producing their *papier timbré*, they attempted to take action in court. They then learned that while every Frenchman had the right to summon any person, even if resident in China, before a French court, the foreigner did not "exist in law" in France because he was not recognised as residing there; only after much hesitation of the High Courts was this injustice remedied. These foreigners thought they could now congratulate themselves on the fact that "justice in France is free", but they were soon to become aware that the Frenchman likes to make use of long words, with which to hide disagreeable facts even from himself, as an attractive embellishment. They found that the Courts of Justice, called in short "Le Palais", over the gilt

doors of which, as though to attract custom, they imagined the words "Admission free" would be inscribed, were separated from the outside world by high iron railings. Justice was free in France in precisely the same way as a maximum price was fixed in restaurants in Britain in 1942 with the exception of the house charges, which sometimes amounted to three times the fixed price and formed a constant subject for caustic British witticism.

Foreigners found it difficult to believe that a revolution really had taken place in France, admittedly some considerable time ago and now almost forgotten, which had swept away privileges. They found that the functions of registrar, process-server, solicitor and *notaire* (who alone has the right to issue affidavits, draw up property or company contracts and wills and make them legal by his very signature) still existed. They were handed down from father to son or purchased at high cost, and thus justice remained somewhat expensive, if not inaccessible. But when they had paid the bills of these henchmen of justice, without whose help justice could not operate, they at least hoped to obtain a "free judgment", since justice was after all "free". They were still mistaken, because they could not even obtain a writ of judgment without paying fantastically high dues proportionate to the sum involved, and this had to be done without even knowing whether the debtor was solvent. Were he insolvent they found that there was no way in France of proving the debtor's bad faith, since the "failure" or bankruptcy of a private individual was not acknowledged nor was the ethical and very practical method, applied successfully in other countries of making the debtor state under oath his financial position, practised in France. They were brought finally to understand that the smooth yellow document with the stamp of the French Republic at the top was only a snare and delusion, a sham screen, in the use of which "the French are past masters", as the French-Nazi writer Ajalbert said in Paris in 1942 when complaining about the dummy bottles on the shelves, which should no longer have been allowed to leave the French one last illusion.

This same *papier timbré* complex, this desire to skim over difficulties and "find an easy way out", to "hedge" rather than take harsh but salutary measures, had greatly influenced the financial system in France, the economic foundation of the State. The Frenchman does not pay taxes with any degree of pleasure and, unlike the Englishman, does not hesitate to "do" the Inland Revenue, his Public Enemy No. 1, by trying on all kinds of



dodges, especially "hole-in-the-corner" and "under-the-counter" deals. The Treasury, instead of trying to rouse feelings of responsibility, made a point of arranging that taxes in France should not prove a hardship to the public. But to obtain the necessary revenue without hitting the wealthy a scale of indirect taxation was introduced which was a heavy burden on the people and made financial or real estate transactions almost impossible, since the State levied a registration tax on every deal, reaching sometimes as much as one-third of the sum concerned.

This desire to avoid facing up to facts at any cost had a disastrous influence on public life and politics, where an "easy" compromise—and in this art Pierre Laval excelled—was always looked upon as a crafty politician's "highest attainment".

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## CHAPTER IX

### JUSTICE

ANY foreigners unfortunate enough to have dealings with the penal laws in force had to pay dearly for the illusions they had nursed about the "absolute freedom of defence" in Court and the brilliant oratory of French barristers. The talents of a Moro-Giaffery or of the stentorian-voiced Henri Torr  s, his disciple, combined with their histrionic abilities, were reserved for special occasions at the Courts of Justice, which were made famous by the acquittal of the Ukrainian Jew Goldbart, the murderer of Petljura for motives of vengeance, and the unforgettable attack on Goering which roused world-wide admiration, pronounced during a public meeting held in the Salle Wagram at the time of the Reichstag fire trial. Moro was to suffer for his courage in 1943.

For ordinary cases the Courts kept strictly to the spirit of Napol  on I's penal code, which favoured written evidence and sometimes the "secret file" methods, the unfortunate influence of which on the judges' decisions was proved to an indignant world by the famous "memorandum" of the Dreyfus proceedings.

Victor Hugo's eloquent phrase that "were he to be accused of stealing the bells of Notre Dame he would immediately take flight" comes too near the truth to be amusing; for a suspect is in the normal way first arrested and charged, and treated as

though convicted without being heard, being practically condemned on entering the court. It seems strange to a Frenchman to hear it so often said that in England an accused person is always considered innocent until convicted, whereas the opposite is the case in France. This opinion, theoretically inexact, is in practice justified, being brought about by the Englishman's pragmatic outlook, which neglects the "trimmings" to get down to "business".

The method adopted in France of first convicting and only later asking for explanations was not an "Alice in Wonderland" kind of fancy, but a stark fact, a regrettable inheritance from former procedure and arising from the *papier timbré* complex which would recoil in horror at the idea that the prosecutor could affix his seal to a warrant against an innocent person, with the unfortunate consequence that judges looked upon the accused as a person brought before them not to be "judged" but to be "convicted", and considered it their duty to ratify the work of the examining magistrate.

Unless this attitude combined with the narrow sense of caste which allows the Minister for Justice in the normal course of events to give "directives" to the prosecuting counsels and "advice" to the judges in important or political cases, is understood, it is impossible to explain why Dreyfus, recognised as innocent, had to wait twelve years even after the discovery of the real traitor to be finally reinstated after a fresh judgment—the third—had been pronounced. General de la Laurencie complained in a letter addressed to Darlan, who had excluded him from the National Council as a measure of sanction for having dared to express his pro-British feelings, that this measure had been taken without his being granted a hearing, making it be thought that this procedure had been invented by the new masters. The General had not suffered the same experience as the refugees under the system in force when the Republic was drawing towards its end, for had he had such experience he could not have been indignant when the same proceedings were applied against him—in a fine spirit of "tradition".

A foreign lawyer, watching the proceedings in a criminal court, might well imagine himself in an auction room where the judge alone could fix the price. The defendants file in under guard and take their places in a row on the defendants' bench. Their names are called and the charge is read by the Clerk of the Court. They see the lawyer supplied to defend them—every accused person having the right to such assistance—advance, murmur

a few words, the judge turn to the right and left where the legal advisers and prosecuting attorneys are sitting in complete disinterest, generally busy preparing another case, and then a few moments later they learn the decision of the court. Before having even had time to realise that they have been charged and sentenced they have to make way for the next victim of this juridical guillotine which can deal in no time with a hundred or so "cases". Only on their return to the cells do they remember the fine phrases they had intended to pronounce in their defence. Furthermore, the lawyer concerned has only been doing his duty, since he knows that to contest the facts carefully assembled by the examining magistrate, or a lengthy pleading would double the toll. The judges are imbued with the implicit belief that a really innocent person will always find means of disproving his guilt during the course of an enquiry. The lawyer, therefore, who "throws himself on the protection of the court" proves to the judge that he is "collaborating" with justice, as it is his duty to "find out the truth", while another who rages and storms only insults the court by these unusual proceedings by throwing its good faith into doubt, and it is the client who in the long run "invariably pays" and suffers the consequences of this unequal dispute. French judges, moreover, although perhaps lenient, and too indulgent, to say the least of it, towards the "Cagoulards", who were all released under the Daladier Government; and pitilessly hard towards the "Communists", like the judges in Germany under the Weimar Republic, tended to show considerable kindness and indulgence towards the ordinary criminal. They were often inclined to treat him with a certain kind of *bonhomie* so that the relatively light sentences sometimes astonished the foreign observer. The *papier timbré* complex dictated to the judge his duty of applying the law and seeing "justice" done, but prevented him from being influenced by any feelings of retaliation. A judge in France accepts wholeheartedly the idea of being the "gamekeeper" of society to keep it within the bounds of its privileges, but refuses to become an "executioner". In Germany, on the contrary, the idea that the penalty should serve as a terrifying example and be dictated by the law of retaliation inspires the judge with the feeling that he is the administrator of a divine will and can consequently pronounce with a tranquil heart long sentences of hard labour. The judge in Germany punishes infringements of the moral law, in France transgressions against the rules of society. That is the reason why long before Hitler's ascendancy in Europe there existed in France the penalty of *indefinite de séjour* (the

citizen in France who proves after several sentences, even light ones, that he cannot respect the *contrat social* is restricted by "society", in his movements, to certain specified towns) or, in serious cases, even of—*bagne* (the convicted is deported to the French colony of Guyanan, where he has to remain for as long as ten years after the completion of his sentence).

No other country had retained such a form of penalty, a cursed relic from the old system, virtually implying the convict's complete exclusion from society without hope of return, since the *bagnard* can never find a place again in the community. Yet it must be admitted that this principle, when coupled with the social aim of re-educating the malefactor, is in conformity with the modern conception of organised society, which tends to make greater demands on the individual for the common good, even the temporary sacrifice of freedom. When Hitler enlarged upon this principle and was the first to apply it, like a thunderbolt, against his political opponents, the France of Daladier, a falsification of the Popular Front original idea, was the first in Europe to follow his example, sending refugees and later French Communists and other "suspects" to "assembly centres". The euphemistic touch about the phrase, this use of pleasant-sounding words and the typically French attempt to produce a pleasing façade, in no way lessened the shameful cruelty of this measure nor prevented later the introduction of the inhuman methods employed in Nazi concentration camps. The other countries in Western Europe hesitated no longer after seeing France choose the road leading to inevitable disaster, for it is only too clear to the far-sighted observer that such abnormal measures against refugees mean that "there is something rotten in the State of Denmark" and that reaction is in the process of finding the habitual victim as a scapegoat.

Britain alone, whatever be said about her capitalist conservative system, recoiled before a measure so fundamentally in opposition to the spirit of *habeas corpus* and only put it into force as a war-time measure. That the whitish pre-war dictatorship and the pure white Vichy counter-revolution should continue on the same road, banishing not only foreigners and refugees (*après tout, des métèques, mon ami*), but an increasing number of political opponents, their own compatriots, to concentration camps, is less surprising than the indignation it aroused among large sections of the international public, who had remained inactive while this treatment was exclusively reserved for the "poor refugees".

Britain, where it would have been impossible even in 1914

to imagine a British citizen being arrested, for reasons of national security, instead of being brought before a judge for subversive activities, was obliged to adopt such measures in 1940. This fact illustrates more clearly perhaps than anything else not only the profound change that has taken place in the general attitude since 1914 and world-wide "civil war" character of the struggle against Nazism and Fascism, but also that the strongest armour of democratic tradition cannot preserve a country from being influenced by the bad example of the most notorious enemy of the traditional principles of individual freedom. People are inclined too easily to forget that the Allies succeeded in winning the war against the "Kaiser's dictatorship" without having recourse to such methods, which contain the tainted seed of the evil issue at bay.

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CHAPTER X

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## THE "TABAC"

THE *papier timbré* complex derives its name from the yellow official forms which could only be bought at the *tabac*, the *café-bistrot* with the exclusive right to sell tobacco. The *tabac* not only dispensed the paper, but was in itself the symbol of its inherent spirit in everyday life, since the sale of tobacco, by State permission, was as much a monopoly as the manufacture itself—and monopoly meant security. Therefore it was a practical expression of recognition for services rendered to the State, a reward reserved for deserving old officials or disabled ex-Servicemen. The licence to open a *tabac* or the purchase of one meant an appreciable income and was as much sought after as the Legion of Honour, which only carried a pension from the rank of "Commandant". A *tabac* meant a fat income like a lawyer's practice, transferable under the same conditions and only with official approval, to prevent abuse. In the eyes of the public the proprietor was a highly respected person, with considerable influence. He had achieved what all these good citizens with a keen desire for independence dreamed about—material security and an assured livelihood. In some Paris districts, and especially in the provinces, it was he who "swayed the elections". The various parties held their meetings in these *café-bistrots*. On election day their various headquarters would

be found at the *Tabac Dupont* or the *Tabac du Père Philippe*.

The atmosphere of the *vieux tabac* was the clearest reflection of this feeling of false security and pleasant irresponsibility.

Here the ordinary Frenchman regularly received his *apéritif* and his political education. The *tabac* influenced him more than the newspapers, which although much read, did not exercise the same predominant influence on the formation of public opinion. How often could one hear: "What do you expect? They're all alike: they're all bought." The word *vendu* seemed always to be pronounced with a sigh of fatalistic inevitability.

The family reunions on Sunday afternoons in the *tabac* with the traditional *belote* games were sacrosanct and provided an outlet for all the difficulties of the week. There all appeared in a rosy light when Paul said: "Nothing to worry about, Pierre; everything will come out all right."

There the weak met with friendly understanding, half condoning, half compassionate when he explained: "What else could I do, *chérie*?"

Thus in the *tabac* the insistence on externals and keeping up appearances were favoured, forming the whole gamut of ideas and way of life of a *petit bourgeois*, whose figure in France has almost attained the perfection of a prototype. His one real ambition was to become an official, which meant the tranquil life of a *rond-de-cuir*, a hide-bound "red-tapist", while others could have the bother of "muddling through" in the struggle of existence. A deputy who did not manage to find a few extra jobs in his constituency had little chance of re-election. The obvious result was an artificial growth of official bodies, which however badly paid, were nevertheless a heavy burden on public funds. There are relatively few judges or magistrates in Britain, but the posts that do exist are extremely well paid. France had far too many; but the remuneration was poor. Since the job of functionary, even in its most distorted form, or those of solicitor, clerk of the court, bailiff, *notaire* or *tabac* proprietor represented everyone's dream ideal, such positions were difficult to obtain and carefully guarded. Every citizen could, in principle, become a functionary, but in practice it was almost impossible to obtain even the meanest post without plenty of "pull" or without "knowing the ropes", "influence" being far more effective than personal merit. The political parties in power kept the most important posts in their own hands, as in other countries, but as far as the others were concerned a surprising equity reigned, for they proportionately divided among the other political parties, totalling twenty odd in France.

## CHAPTER XI

## THE POLICY OF SECULARISATION

"I must confess to a feeling of repulsion. The fact is that it is instinctive with me not to like foreigners, and I loathe Protestants, and as you are both, you see . . ."

"I quite understand, but what have you got against foreigners?"

"Oh, I've absolutely nothing against them except that they're not French."

"And against Protestants?"

"Crowds of things. In my view they're two-faced, hypocritical scum, in fact rats. And so . . . but of course I agree there are exceptions . . . but I mean Protestants as a whole, and French Protestants, naturally, since they're the only ones I know."

*Le Mariage de Chiffon*, by Gyp, page 190.

THE same formal parity often prevented a qualified judge being nominated for the *Cour de Cassation*, the highest Court in France, because he was a Protestant and the number of posts reserved for Protestants in accordance with this equitable system had already been filled.

The associations formed by solicitors and *notaires* supervised the transfer of practices in a spirit that prevented, for instance, the spread of anti-Semitism arising from a fear of rivalry, among the officials or occupants of legal practices. Such an anti-Semitic feeling was in fact practically impossible since in Paris, for example, among the two hundred odd solicitors there were only a few Jews and the solicitors' associations jealously ensured that this proportion was not exceeded. The method used was simple, the authorisation for the transfer of a practice to a Jew was generally refused. This procedure was looked upon as so normal that everyone would have been most indignant had a *numerus clausus* in France for Protestants or Jews been mentioned. Among the fifty Finance inspectors, the highest officials in the Ministry of Finance, there was only one Jew. Such a state of affairs was an extraordinary demonstration of the idea of "Liberty and Equality" as regards Jews and Protestants; yet it was in no way inspired by any anti-Semitic feeling which was practically non-existent, since the same attitude was also adopted towards Protestants. It was typical that anti-Semitism should have been fairly pronounced among the four thousand barristers in the Courts of Justice, barristers being a liberal profession open to

all and including some 40 per cent Jews. These happenings were entirely the outcome of a democratic system which believed that the application of proportionate allocations would ensure fair treatment for all, although in practice the majority obtained all the advantages and the minority virtually suffered all the disadvantages of this ruling. Once again the *papier timbré* complex was satisfied, once the formalities were observed, and found no cause whatever to worry about any injustices resulting from this method in practice.

The Chamber of Deputies often had proposals under debate for abolishing relics from the old system, antediluvian privileges and out-dated methods which hampered seriously the processes of justice, itself slow and badly in need of fundamental reform. But the influence of certain solicitor and *notaire* circles, which had slowly produced a restricted group entirely recruited by the criterion of social standing from the more refined elements, prevented the slightest change in a system categorically opposed to the furtherance of young talents and free competition.

Formal equity, as the narrow-minded understood it, was not observed and its general rules governing advancement were frankly infringed in the Army, when it was a question of a superior officer who "went to Mass". The struggle between the State and the Catholic Church, in which Bismarck had to yield during the *Kulturkampf* in the seventies, had been decided in France in favour of the Radical-Socialist Party, whose pronounced secular spirit, "Jacobin" even, when it came into being had unquestionably won the day by the separation of the Church and the State. The name of this party might well give the idea that it was a Socialist Party in a radical sense. Like all political party names in France this was only a "blind", another attractive façade, a concession to the wishes and desires of the great masses. In actual fact the Radical-Socialist Party was in no way Socialist and still less radical. It was the ordinary little man's party, representing the French lower middle-class, small private people, peasants and black-coated workers; it had a working majority in the Chamber from its foundation in the beginning of the century, and governed France even on the rare occasions when their deputies were not actually in the Government. The members of this party, however much they differed on political and economic questions, all agreed on one principle, the policy of secularisation. The majority of the members went even further; they felt a distrust, almost a hatred of the Church, and



regarded practising Catholic officials as reactionary and the Republic's enemies.

Reuben Saillens, a Protestant minister, has caught in his book, *The Soul of France*, this deep-rooted feeling among a section of the French people in the following terms:

"The Bill—Separation of the Churches from the State—was passed in December 1905, soon after the 'Dreyfus case' had drawn to its conclusion, and there was evidently a relation between the two events. The Church had made the great mistake of throwing her influence on the side of the reactionary party, which had been most strongly opposed to the re-hearing of the Dreyfus trial. When the case appeared in its true light, the Church came in for a large share of the indignation which fell upon those who had strenuously opposed justice. The stain still remains; and the most unfortunate result of this was that the people's distrust of the Church became for many a dislike for religion itself.

"In matters of religion, here as in every other country, women are conservative. There are many cities and villages where the churches before the war were absolutely deserted by the men; and the boys, after their 'first Communion', would have thought it a degradation to attend Mass or sermon. The same spirit reigned among Protestants, in some parishes at least. There were some where not a single man would darken the doors of the church. Strangely enough, those same men did not wish their wives and daughters to share their religious indifference. It was the proper thing for the womenfolk to go to church, the men being content to wait outside or in the neighbouring cafés until, the service over, they might take them back in their carts to their farms."

London, 1916. p. 200 and p. 233.

The Radical-Socialist Party's Executive had to keep up with this current and make concessions, the most notable of which was the exclusion of Weygand until the very last minute from the High Command. Yet did not Weygand's example perhaps prove that the people's instinct was once again right and that the choice of Weygand as "the country's saviour" was the greatest mistake ever made? Reynard put in power an open friend of the "Cagoulards" and a declared enemy of the Republic, a man whose ambition had always been to set up again in France an autocratic system on a Catholic basis in the political sense, even at the cost of a defeat, having always in mind that the Republican system itself was after all born out of a defeat.

## CHAPTER XII

## THE BREACH OF CONTRACT HABIT

THE tendency of a people to guard itself against the defects of its character by raising a barrier of preventive measures, culminating in France in the cautiously worded undertaking, the *papier timbré* complex, the "signed and in writing" mania, and degenerating to the point of absurdity where the original reason was no longer apparent, can rarely be effective enough to prevent definitely a suppressed characteristic making an appearance under favourable conditions or even breaking through suddenly in an unexpected moment.

Britain rarely gives an undertaking, but on the other hand sometimes makes allusions of promises and envisages possibilities, which are often misinterpreted by the other party who in disappointment charges her with hypocrisy. Yet once such an undertaking has been formally given it can be relied upon unreservedly. Ribbentrop's illusions can only be explained by his complete failure to understand this essential characteristic of the British people. Britain has very few codified laws, not even a Constitution in the full sense of the word, but a collection of laws, decrees and juridical findings interpreting the laws, which have one common link, the "precedents" and customs which regulate the life of the nation. It sometimes takes centuries to have an out-of-date law formally repealed, because "tradition", the tendency to stand by an undertaking beyond the limit of reason even to the point of absurdity, is often strongly opposed to such a step. The outstanding British characteristic being loyalty, there has been no need for many written precautions to ensure the fulfilment of an undertaking given. Accordingly, the Englishman having developed in his external dealings with others what seems to be the opposite of this, his fundamental characteristic, neglects to prepare every negotiation in writing. Transactions, even important ones, are more often concluded verbally. The Englishman for this reason believes in the first instance in the other party's sincerity and verbal promise, but once deceived becomes furious and obdurate.

It is a dangerous practice for a foreigner to lie in Britain, for he can never regain the confidence of an Englishman, who can better understand a frank and spontaneous avowal than an

attempt to bluff or achieve an object by calculated sophistry, not to mention trickery.

It is almost natural, therefore, for British justice to give the accused a "chance" by letting him speak like any other witness under oath. The judge then decides whether he should be believed in preference to a witness for the prosecution, his decision being inspired by the same impartiality towards witnesses of either defendant or plaintiff. That is the reason why every case in the Court opens with the traditional question put to the defendant, "Guilty or not guilty?" whereas the judge in France, after having enumerated the charges assembled in the records by the examining magistrate, finishes his examination by saying, "Now, Accused, after all you had better confess."

In the belief of his opponent's sincerity, a compromise, a solution dear to the hearts of the British people and much preferred to formal procedure, is often achieved. Therein may lie the psychological explanation, at least in part, of the attitude—let us say strange—of Chamberlain and Britain during the period, preceding 1939—apart from the material and economic causes of the conflict in question, the fear of war in general, of the possible collapse of the capitalist system and the probable victory of Communism, with the consequent preference that a war, should this scourge of God prove inevitable, be unleashed far from her shores in a distant corner of Europe and, last but not least, military unpreparedness.

In the belief of his opponent's dishonesty, fearing his cunning and well-founded rights, or the traps and loopholes in the agreement supporting his own demands, the Frenchman only abandons his beloved "procedure" through weakness and accepts a compromise with resignation. Should he believe his cause well-founded, he will never give up the formal procedure, but will hold out for his rights, only giving up if he finally envisages the possibility of his opponent's cause having more chance of success with the judge. Should he know his cause to be weak he will call in procedure on his side with the aim of achieving a compromise, because the proposal of a compromise at the beginning of "hostilities" would be an obvious sign of wavering. Compromise for the Frenchman is a proof of weakness; to the Englishman it is the outcome of "straight bargaining."

A British Poincaré, having decided after much hesitation to occupy the Ruhr, would never have withdrawn in the face of the difficulties of the job, once the policy of insisting upon the detailed execution of the Treaty of Versailles had been under-

taken. Poincaré's withdrawal poisoned Franco-German relations without achieving the aim of definitely weakening the economic power of Germany. Poincaré's policy, carried out successfully, would perhaps have upset a Briand-style temporary pacification of Europe and broken Germany by a frank intervention "in the home affairs of another country", but would certainly have prevented Hitler becoming the central figure of our age.

The German rarely arrives at a compromise, which for him means a humiliation, but goes to extreme measures to impose his will, descending if necessary to crime. The Englishman, a member of the Anglo-Saxon branch of the Germanic tribe, also carries things to the extreme because he never abandons an acquired right, but under the influence of Roman and Norman practical reasoning power will acquiesce before the law of the majority. The German will supersede the law of the majority, by evoking a superior, eternal, mystic right. The figure of Michael Kohlhaas in von Kleist's unforgettable story is typical of this transcendental conception. An honest man who has been wronged turns into a dangerous criminal in order to ensure his rights.

An outstanding French characteristic is the desire for change, to be free of weighty shackles and to "fix things". Knowing this defect in his character, and mistrusting his wayward temper, he has developed the habit of having everything "in writing", and on *papier timbré*, and introduced formal procedure to bolster up his volatile temperament with rigid forms and rules, dictated by reason, but these suppressed characteristics often break out so that "he cannot be relied upon". Karl Sternheim, a modern German poet, who loathed the narrow, ultra-nationalist, warped spirit of the Kaiser's Germany and the "virtual rulers" of the Republic, left his country for this reason, and to prove his intention of remaining European, he sought refuge after the last war in Switzerland, that small secular democratic country. In 1924 he re-visited Paris. He published his impressions in a little book which might usefully be read to-day. He received a warm welcome from the intellectual colony and the various salons "*en vogue*", and roused a certain amount of sympathy because of his attitude, frankly anti-Kaiser even during the war. He was struck by the astounding influence of French culture on the European mind and pointed out ironically that van Dongen the Dutchman, Picasso the Spaniard, and even Fuji the Japanese would have been indignant at the thought that anyone might not consider them as typically French painters. Louis Jouvet had

proposed of his own accord to produce in Paris one of Sternheim's modern comedies in which he bitterly castigates the German lower middle classes. Jouvett did not keep his promise and the German commented that he was everywhere met in Paris by this breach of contract attitude, which he feared would not only affect relations between nations, but would spread like a plague, infecting behaviour in general throughout Europe. He was not mistaken in his prophetic foresight.

For on this ground, too, Hitler broke all records in making this regrettable habit the fundamental basis of his policy. Hitler never once produced an original idea either in politics or the arts of war, but always recognised with his special gift of eclectic the profitable use to which others' undeveloped ideas, combined with the almost constitutional weakness of his opponents, could be put, first at home and then throughout Europe; it was for him to turn the breach of contract habit into a fine art, only possibly surpassed in skill by Japanese statesmen.

Foreigners coming to France encountered this breach of contract habit everywhere, in politics, private life and business customs. Roman jurists had already sought a formula to justify this bad habit, much more apparent among the Latin nations than in others, and introduced a phrase to cover a flagrant injustice—*clausula rebus sic stantibus*—the condition of altered circumstances.

Francis I pleaded his captivity to repudiate the validity of a treaty of peace concluded with Charles V. France had recourse to a different excuse for refusing to meet the war debt to America, a political act having paramount influence on European politics between the two wars and resulting in America's attitude of reserve towards Europe. France did not pay because Germany had not paid, as though the fact of a man through economic necessity, or deliberately because of his evil character, not keeping his word, could give another man a moral excuse for failing to keep his own obligations towards a third, in spite of the latter having given him every possible support to prevent him from succumbing when attacked by the first. Herriot alone of all these French statesmen recognised the gravity of the position and refused to give the authority of his name to an action which based the principle of French policy towards America on a lame, knavish argument—long before the time of Hitler.

Herriot's resignation as Prime Minister, in protest against the Chamber of Deputies' decision and as proof that his esteem for

the inviolable sanctity of a promise given was greater than any personal ambition, did little to lessen the blame and reproach of such an attitude, which the Americans have deeply resented since this unfortunate and ominous incident.

In French home affairs, there is no better example of this breach of contract attitude being adopted as a last resort than the history of the Popular Front. The same Daladier who swore an oath against Fascism in the deceptive exuberance of July 14, 1935, had already begun to undermine the Government of Léon Blum by July 14, 1936. He was impelled by ambition and upheld by all the reactionary elements of the Radical-Socialist Party in his furtive efforts to exploit craftily the disappointment felt among the leaders of the party that the post of Prime Minister had to be given to a rival party. He did not cease his back-stage intrigues in the Chamber until he got to the top, after a short interlude during which Camille Chautemps was in power because he had shouted so loudly about it being "his turn" that he had to be allowed to hold office for a few months. He openly broke his solemn promise that he would not overthrow the coalitions against the express wish of the people and would never rely on Right Wing support without first consulting the country. Camille Chautemps, moreover, in his capacity of Deputy Prime Minister, had many times given the same promise. The same masses who had joyously brought to power their idol Léon Blum, and had had implicit faith in Daladier, were no longer roused to indignation but submitted to the slow yet continuous trend towards Fascism, incapable of even an instinctive reaction. When, however, this instinct nevertheless urged them to take action on November 30, 1938, it was too late, and Daladier was able to quell the "revolt" more easily than on February 6, 1934.

This policy of breach of contract had paralysed the people's normally healthy reactions and smothered all instinct for revolt. They were plunged into a state of complete prostration, their position being rather that of a passive audience watching the fierce internal struggles between the leaders of the different parties, all of which in turn had deceived and disillusioned them. They were not to awake from this cataleptic state until after the complete collapse of the whole system, only then to realise after a period of frenzied bewilderment and agonised inactivity, the depths to which they had fallen and the dreadful abyss into which they had allowed themselves to sink.

"I have never had a more sincere or more effusive welcome in all my life. Old women and little children came running into the middle of the road to say '*Bon jour*' and shake me by the hand.

"They have got a hand-shaking obsession. The tiny ones do not know what the gesture means, but they do it."

DOON CAMPBELL, *News Chronicle*, 11th July, 1944.

"On this point I feel it is a pity that the average British soldier has never been told that the French are punctilious about shaking hands all round on arrival and departure. We may unwittingly cause offence by failure to observe the custom."

They've always a welcome for "les Tommies", by a British officer just back from Normandy. *Daily Telegraph*, 29th July, 1944.

It would have been extraordinary had such an attitude, so deeply rooted in public life, not had regrettable effects in private life. A spirit of carelessness, a "don't care" attitude, admiration for "clever dodges", and a vague attitude towards the making, still less the keeping of clear-cut promises were no longer looked upon as serious defects in character but rather as expressive of a way of life. It would be discourteous not to promise impossible things. Only the foreign newcomers, who were not accustomed to this showy exuberance, this inexpensive kindness, this superficiality in friendly relations, took these shallow promises—"We'll see that everything is fixed all right, old man, nothing in the world could be easier"—at their face value. In this they were often deceived by a strange fact, only possible in France, this country of a thousand contradictions. It did sometimes happen that apparently impossible things were satisfactorily fixed in no time and "knotty problems" settled by a telephone call. But as soon as there was the slightest obstacle or the least difficulty or the smallest responsibility involved, perfectly straightforward affairs dragged on endlessly. This was true in private matters and far more so in official and public affairs.

The foreigners in France grew slowly accustomed to this flow of practically meaningless words and phrases and the friendly gesture which meant even less. Two things soon became clear to them—that nothing in France could be relied upon, for if a thing did happen it would always be regarded as a miracle, and that the Frenchman is not really polite (unlike the Englishman, who is by nature courteous, although less ostentatious), and so to make up for this lack in temperament has invented the most beautiful phrases, the more agreeable because of the elegant, almost sober method of presentation, very different from the flowery volubility of Chinese courtesy.

They also learned that the catchword of "equality" could sometimes be a little embarrassing. While the Englishman, somewhat cold in outward behaviour, only shakes hands on special occasions and people in England when introduced do not frantically wring each other's hands as though they were deeply attached friends of long standing, the average Frenchman holds out his hand at every possible opportunity, shaking hands with all his employees in his office in the morning, often at midday as well and most certainly in the evening, with everyone he meets when he goes to get a drink *au zinc*, and even with strangers. He looks upon this gesture as the natural expression of equality, regardless of the difference of class, race or standing. This exuberant use of a meaningless gesture has often been ridiculed and one remembers the story of the English-born Queen Marie of Rumania, who, delighted that the British Ambassador did not kiss her hand, exclaimed: "At last, somebody well brought up!" Yet the majority of foreigners in France were charmed by this gesture, which remains one of the most symbolically lovely and most attractive façades.

This breach of contract habit was more evident still in the institution of private life everywhere considered as the fundamental basis of the life of a nation—marriage. Republican France has retained two of the old system's institutions, one through habit, the other in spite of the separation of Church and State, out of regard for the individual conscience: the mistress and the *separation de corps*. (This legal separation in France is a restricted form of divorce generally adopted by the parties concerned for religious reasons because the marriage tie is not definitely cut.) The development of a more broad-minded and less hypocritical outlook tended to give the mistress legal standing and almost to do away with the out-of-date institution of separation.

The result of this was an alarming increase in the number of divorces, with the indirect result of making the lowered birth-rate fall even further. The fall in the birth-rate, which had been on the decrease since 1920, was an indication for anyone interested in demography of the slow but continuous biological decline of France. In 1940 the mortality figures were already 200,000 in excess of the birth (approximately 600,000), which meant a decrease of 9 per cent on the figures for 1939. During the first quarter of 1941, for obvious enough reasons, the birth-rate fell as low as 100,000.

The Courts were kept so busy with divorce proceedings that



Bonnet, as Minister for Justice, was compelled to introduce by special decree an accelerated and simplified procedure. Malicious tongues claimed that he hurried this decree through in order to please Paul Reynaud, who was separated from his wife and wished to change this state of affairs to divorce pure and simple. No idle chatter could have had less foundation, since Reynaud could have always found a quick solution to the problem through the ordinary channels. The real reason was that the breach of contract habit had begun to attack the very source of life of the nation, and too great an accumulation of cases would have irritated and alarmed the sane element, the majority of French people with a normal outlook. Here again, instead of facing up to the problem it was thought possible to banish it by getting rid of the troublesome facts and ignoring the real causes. Instead of going down to the root of the evil it was considered sufficient to lop off a few of those branches which spoil the view, thus restoring *la belle façade*.

It might be expected that the characteristic effects of the *papier timbré* complex and the breach of contract habit would be very evident in commercial affairs. Such, however, was not the case. By one of the numerous contradictions in this country where often the various classes and groups of the population have developed customs and habits of their own, whose common cultural source, however, could not be effaced, these effects were never obtrusive there. On the occasions they did become apparent it was under a more involved, less direct and milder form. Already, outwardly, a clear separation existed between civil and commercial affairs in Court, with a special and less rigid procedure introduced for commerce, as though Napoléon, whose commercial code was still in force in France 130 years later, had wished to give practical expression to the generally accepted feeling dating from the old system that commercial affairs were of less importance, if not actually on a lower plane. The prescriptions laid down in the Civil Code were imbued with a rigid, formal spirit. Questions of family rights, inheritance and property were given cautious, detailed treatment, with very little initiative left to the judge. In commercial cases, however, the judge was allowed far more freedom in the estimation of the facts laid before him. He even had the right, should the need arise, to accept verbal testimony instead of a written undertaking, from which it might be assumed that business men did not always have recourse to having everything "in writing". Further to stress this independence, the juridical system in France even

created special Courts. While such cases are generally heard elsewhere in Europe in the Civil Courts, sometimes specially constituted with a magistrate and two commercial advisers, France since the time of Napoléon has had Commercial Courts where even the presiding magistrate is a business man elected by the other business men of the area.

In every country the judge depends in technical matters on the advice of experts. This institution has been curiously developed in France. It was the experts to a great extent who carried out the examinations in civil litigation and in their capacity of "adviser-experts" tried to arbitrate between the parties. Were they unsuccessful they did not simply give technical advice, but at the same time suggested the juridical lines on which a decision should be based, which the judge generally followed. They even acted as advisers in absolute problems of law, so that a judge encountering a difficulty of the kind could hand the documents to one of these experts who would then to all intents and purposes do the work of the Court, however extraordinary this might appear to the eyes of a foreigner. Since the judges in these commercial Courts had a very restricted knowledge of the law and legal procedure, a commercial case was more often than not decided by the advisers.

The eventuality could even arise of a complicated case being submitted to several experts at the same time or to a second and then a third to confirm or disprove the opinion expressed by the first before the case coming before the Court and afterwards on going to appeal. If the civil procedure was slow and encumbered with a mass of out-dated formalities, the method in the Commercial Courts was certainly less rigid, but slowed up still more by the work of the advisers and the discretionary powers of the judge to grant a defaulting trader the facility of long-term repayment.

As a result, therefore, though the French business man is honestly straightforward in his dealings, the legal system tended to favour his innate tendency to make the most of a fine chance, "to do a deal", to allow flexibility in the execution of his obligations and test his wits at "dodges".

Even when business was going well he was never in a hurry to pay and in no way embarrassed were a draft presented to him several times. It seemed to him that he behaved very well to pay a part in cash and give his supplier a Bill for the rest. The suppliers in turn employed the same method with their manufacturers and they too with the banks, the supreme arbiters in the commercial hierarchy. The banks would only take

rigorous measures, if they thought their indulgence was being abused. Only then would they have recourse to a process-server. Rather than undertake costly and often fruitless proceedings, they would often prefer to put the defaulting trader on the "Black List", a far more effective method and a penalty far more feared on account of its practical effect. No one in France would consider such a casual method of dealing with commercial affairs in any way remiss, unjust or dishonest, which in fact it was not either in practice or intention, because "there was nothing in writing". An order, even if the business man did "sign" it, would all the same "not be a contract". It would be carried out, naturally enough, if circumstances allowed. The delivery would be made and accepted, were the conditions at the moment of execution still the same as at the time of the order being "signed", but had the circumstances changed, a "polite refusal" could be given without the other party becoming too insistent. Good faith was the motive force of commercial life in France, while the law had no moral or effective power. Moreover, the business man was very well aware that the regulations to control his activities, impressively drawn up on paper by officials far removed from commercial life, remained for the most part a dead letter since they did not cope with reality. He saw no need to worry about transgressing against a theoretical decree, but would be careful not to break a commercial custom, because such a thing would seriously lower his standing in the eyes of the other members of his trade.

As soon, however, as it was a question of a company contract or the purchase of good-will, his whole attitude would change and become normal. All his instincts of suspicion and distrust would be awakened. He would consult lawyers, and solicitors, and only append his signature after having carefully gone through with his wife, in his capacity as the responsible "head" of the "conjugal community", every clause, every paragraph, every phrase of the contract. But once signed, this document became sacrosanct, and he would not yield a fraction of his rights. Typically enough, apart from ordinary proceedings to obtain payment, 80 per cent of the other cases heard before the Commercial Courts concerned litigation about companies' affairs and the purchase of goodwill.

What first began as a bad habit, an easygoing attitude, a general imposition on good faith, while yet remaining a mild form of the breaking-of-promises mentality, turned with the progressive spread of the depression into a systematic expedient,

a manifestation of bad faith and open breach of contract. Though the statistics up to 1933 showed relatively few bankruptcies cases the number of business men who sought a moratorium or were compelled to wind up their business increased rapidly from that date. Thenceforward fraudulent bankruptcies were no longer the exception.

The breach of contract attitude which had only appeared in the years of prosperity in an intangible, carefully concealed form, quickly penetrated into business customs. Business men no longer delayed payments because they could use the money in the meantime, but made no payments at all, or rather changed their suppliers to try the same trick on the next one. Dishonoured drafts accumulated in the banks to such an extent that the whole financial system was tottering when the Popular Front came into power. The predominance of economic factors and their far-reaching influence on the course of political events overrode from that moment party programmes.

Paul Reynaud, ardent supporter of a "controlled devaluation", had for years been preaching the application of systematic inflation. In spite of all the horrors of such a measure, the tragic consequences of which could clearly be seen by the whole world at this moment in Germany, in a product styled Hitler, he was unable to find any other method of saving France than this double-edged remedy invented by Schacht. The Right Wing and Centre parties up till then in power remembered only too well that Poincaré had been called in to stop the slide towards the "billions" to dare again to suggest to the people this poison, so bitterly rued in 1926, as a wonderful find fresh from the alchemist's retort. It seemed preferable to leave the administration of this "cure-all" to the Socialist Party, on whom later all the blame for past mistakes could be laid and against whom the inevitable fury of the frustrated people could be directed.

The Socialist Party, unanimously supporting the "little imp" Reynaud, completely abandoned by the Right Wing, promptly fell into the trap, possibly under the delusion that this method would make it possible for them to attack the power of the capitalist monster, without having learned any lesson whatever from the German example, although this had clearly shown that the working and middle classes inevitably feel the effects of this scourge first and with most force.

Vincent Auriol's party (he was Minister for Finance in the First Blum Government) had always preached in its programme and, when in opposition, upheld in practical politics the sanctity

of treaties and contracts. As a result of the confusion in the minds of the Socialist leaders, this party barely arrived in power in coalition with the Radical-Socialist Party and other less influential adherents of the Popular Front, disregarded the grave warnings given by far-sighted veterans of the Labour movement and became in spite of itself the obvious sponsor of this breach of contract attitude. In the belief that one of the fundamental bases of the capitalist system, monetary stability, was being offered up on the people's altar, this party gave the capitalists by this inflation an opportunity of preparing a counter-attack, which culminated in the temporary immolation of one of the main essentials of the democratic system, individual freedom.

Business circles frankly supported the inflationist policy of Paul Reynaud, being certain that they could not fail to gain over this policy, since the value of their stocks would rise quickly, while at the same time they would not have immediately to meet their obligations. They did not look beyond the tips of their noses and did not for a moment imagine that a day would come when their stocks would be exhausted with no possibility of renewal. The selfish breach of contract attitude had ended by dulling their faculties as far-sighted business men and stimulating their desire to obtain an immediate, but artificial, profit.

Germany introduced, with refined cynicism, the practice of breach of contract in public affairs, and this became the more ridiculous for the creditor States since Hoover hastened to support this policy by granting Germany a moratorium in 1930 for fear of a complete collapse of the capitalist system in Central Europe. There, however, the strict commercial code was less affected than might have been supposed.

The German Courts were not disposed to let this attitude, encouraged as it was towards foreigners, infiltrate into commercial relations at home. It was still possible to obtain judgment for a draft to be paid within three days, while it was a lucky chance to obtain the same thing in France after several weeks. Emigrants from Central Europe, therefore, were strongly affected by this change in commercial customs. They could not understand that a manufacturer who had promised them sole distribution for an article, whether a novelty or some special model, should sell the same article or the same model to a competitor offering a higher price. They might at a pinch have understood such an action, had the manufacturer at least apologised and proposed an indemnity payment. What really was

outside the scope of their imagination was for a manufacturer simply to send them a few weeks later the quantity ordered after the article in question had already appeared on the counters of the "Prix-Unic" or because the rival customer had not for his part kept his promise to take the article in question. The ingenuity of such an almost childish proceeding might have disarmed a simple mind or anyone fond of a joke, but roused, needless to say, a feeling of distrust among the foreign business men, which was only exceeded by the Frenchman's own inherent suspicion of every foreigner.

Slowly, however, though at a faster rate than their rigorous upbringing might have supposed to be possible, the same foreign business men soon adapted themselves to this method of dealing in commercial matters and surpassed their masters (because it is easy to copy others' defects), and they brought method into this practice, which had formerly been merely a bad habit. The uncertainty of their position helped, and these foreigners slowly acquired the name among French business men of being not very reliable, which often gave rise to tragic-comic situations. The reproach of lack of integrity was, strangely enough, one of the main points of attack among the refugees themselves, the majority of whom were Jews from Eastern Europe or Germany. Since the Jews from farther East had always been regarded in Germany with a certain amount of suspicion by the German Jews, the former now had their revenge, an easy one as they thought, because they were under the wrong impression that the German Jews would not be able to look after themselves in the new surroundings and unaccustomed conditions. The German Jews, however, showed themselves very able and quite capable of competing with these others, who seemed, on account of their Eastern origin and the atmosphere of their previous existence, more likely to be qualified to forge a place for themselves in this almost exclusive commercial field.

These many emigrants did indeed form a separate community in which the "French" ones had the place of honour on account of their nationality, which aroused much envy, for purely material reasons—the foreigners were not generally in a position to give full vent to their desires for unscrupulous competition in their dealings with them. It was somewhat amusing to note in this restricted circle that the Jews from Eastern Europe, who were inscribed on the Commercial Register or even naturalised before 1914, looked with disdain on the "newcomers" who had dared to flood "their" lovely France. It was still more amusing to see them boasting of "their" very "sound" connections and

trying hard to damage the reputation of a newcomer by whispering that he was not considered "sound" in his own country. It was just as ridiculous when a German Jewish business man who had taken refuge in France before September 1936 (a decree issued by the Blum Ministry declared political refugee anyone arriving in France before that date) would emphasise with incredible social pride his longer standing as compared with a Jewish, but not a political, refugee who only left Germany after the pogroms of November 1938, following the murder in the German Embassy in Paris of vom Rath by the young Polish Jew Grynspan (who was finally executed by order of the Germans, by the Vichy Government).

If this theoretical hierarchy in commercial circles influenced to a certain extent their mutual relations, their moral standards scarcely differed, since the German Jews, who had previously been so "Teutonic", stiff and proud, soon proved by their way of living that the *milieu* makes the man and that the Polish Jew had much excuse for his so-called doubtful conduct. Moreover, the German Jews, and in this they were typically German, were soon behaving in a way exactly the opposite of their previous "correct" and confident manner.

The French business man was in the rather bad habit of paying somewhat irregularly the commission due to his representatives or agents. A special Court, a Council for Trade Arbitration,<sup>1</sup> was created to deal with litigation between employers and employees. This Court dealt mainly with two types of cases—non-payment of commission and damages for breach of work contract. The German refugees quickly acquired this fault and the discussions, arbitrations and proceedings among them were nearly always connected with one and the same subject, non-payment of commission. Those who had been uprooted, quickly assumed the moral characteristics of the disinherited and soon became acclimatised to this atmosphere—so foreign to their ordered existence of comfortably-off middle class—of letting things slide with a weary shrug of inevitable fatalism.

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CHAPTER XIII

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## THE "BLACK MARKET"

PRIOR to 1914 the passport had been relegated to a museum of antiquities, since no papers were needed to cross the frontiers of

<sup>1</sup> *Conseil des Prud'hommes*, created in 1845 by Louis Philippe.

Europe. The Russian revolutionaries alone still felt a certain esteem for this remnant from the reactionary times of the Holy Alliance, though it had fallen out of use with the coming of the Liberal era, since they could only leave the country of the Tsar with a passport. On these occasions it was their practice to define a human being as consisting of three things—a body, a soul and a passport. This idyllic state of a Europe at peace could not be revived after the Treaty of Versailles, which had given its blessing to a revival of a spirit of nationalism throughout the Continent, especially in Eastern Europe. The newly created States were the first to introduce the “passport” as the “citizen’s” most important document, and it was they also who inherited the political abuse of this institution from the Tsarist system.

Poland, one of the aggressive, reactionary, dictatorial States typical of the post-war period, had, long before the advent of Hitler, created within her frontiers minority groups of Jews, Ruthenians, White Russians, Lithuanians and others, to whom Polish citizenship was often refused and who were “stateless” within their own country before becoming “of indeterminate nationality” in France. All the little Balkan countries too, and those in Eastern Europe, introduced numerous preventative measures to control “Communist infiltration”.

Czechoslovakia and Poland had already concluded treaties with France in 1920 to regularise the “import” of workers, who had all to be furnished with certified documents. In France itself, however, they were free to remain and were not affected by any administrative measures. The few decrees and regulations concerning foreigners’ residence in France remained inoperative for as long as France had need of these people and the national economy could absorb them without risk. The foreigners arriving with the various waves of emigration, whether economic or political, met with no administrative difficulties on entering France nor in obtaining residence permits. The first strict measures were provoked by an almost forgotten incident—the murder of President Doumer by an insane White Russian, Gorgouloff, in 1932. The first counter-measures were taken in Paris, the forerunners of a distinct change in temperature progressively rising in proportion to the lowering of the standard of living brought about by the spread of depression.

As the difficulties of entering France, or once there of obtaining a residence permit, increased, corruption began to spread through the French Police and consular services in an alarming fashion.



Bribery and corruption are to be found everywhere under different guises. In countries with a more reserved code of behaviour, an official who had acceded to a request might receive a fat cheque one fine day with a little note saying that the liberty had been taken of putting a few pounds on the winner of the last race, which by sheer luck had started at 10 to 1; it might also happen that the official did not accept. The Stavisky affair had already made it abundantly clear that such discretion was no longer in fashion in France, and the "National Revolution", after so many years of malpractice, only tended to make the corruption worse, for even the *Petit Parisien*, on the occasion of the second anniversary of Pétain's rise to power, thundered that corruption was more firmly established than ever. Some of the Eastern Europeans claimed that from 1934 onwards France could scarcely be distinguished in this aspect from Tsarist Russia.

One thing had certainly ceased to be merely a scandal and had degenerated into shameless cynicism, namely, the tariff in the particular form of bribery connected with traffic in passports, and rights of residence in France was virtually standardised, and it was definitely known exactly how much any particular official and the various agents concerned had pocketed.

Since no one could travel without a passport and the majority of refugees in Europe no longer had one, a market in forged passports, "doctored" passports, and genuine but irregular passports issued by the competent authorities but not registered in the consular books, and temporary or diplomatic passports, flourished throughout Europe, with branches in Paris, Zurich and Barcelona. The method of illegally issuing passports was a common practice with some corrupt Nazi consuls in Marseilles and Naples, who would prolong for fantastic sums the validity of German passports for some of the rich Jewish refugees, especially those resident in Paris, since they had found travelling easier with these documents than with the special French passports for refugees, and business as a result better. To obtain a passport it is necessary to have a nationality, and so a naturalisation market was added to the passport racket. The figures for the business done by these markets would well compare with that of any other average international industry. The little Central and Southern American States particularly excelled in this type of modified and modernised "slave" trade.

The Consul-General for a certain country in Paris "naturalised", that is to say inscribed on the private books of the Consulate, thousands of foreigners and then supplied them with

regular passports. They paid a dear price for their dearly prized documents, on an average 25,000 francs, so that obviously only wealthy refugees could avail themselves of this luxury. But those who did, and thus obtained the passports, were free to leave Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, or later, France, and succeeded in arriving safely in America. The consul for this country was said to have been recalled because he did not keep a sufficiently exact record of these new "issues" and had therefore not paid his Minister for Finance the requisite taxes and registration fees. It was also whispered, however, that the Governments of other interested countries intervened to stop what they considered a flagrant abuse.

These consuls from some of the small American States were generally inspired by three honourable motives—to procure relatively large sums for their small countries, to keep a proportionate share for themselves, the amount of which will always remain their secret, and finally to help the refugees. Sometimes they were entirely successful and did a lot of good, sometimes they failed in all three aims. The money remained in the hands of the innumerable intermediaries and agents, who all boasted of being in the Consul's confidence, for the simple reason that they did not even know the Consul by name. Needless to say, the Consul would first learn of the affair when the poor refugee was arrested with the so-called agent, long suspected by the police, and produced in defence a letter from the Consul which naturally would prove to be forged.

Yet generally speaking, apart from swindles no more widespread than for instance in the film industry, this market continued to function satisfactorily for all the interested parties for a number of years. The new "citizens" were content in spite of the Consul concerned having formally forbidden them "under pain of immediate arrest" ever to use these passports for entry into their "new country," since such passports were not "yet registered" there, but "would be a little later". The Consul too was quite content, since he had acted "legally" and at the same time made a profit for himself. The little State too was content, for the money was very acceptable and the bulk of it went to balance the Budget. No one suffered in fact when the Consul "forgot" to register the act of naturalisation.

Just as a new issue of a loan can be affected on the Stock Exchange by rumours or the threat of a scandal, this market underwent fluctuations and had its ups and downs. The scandal connected with Fischer, residing in Antwerp as the Consul for the little State of H., which terminated in his arrest with that of some

of his "collaborators" and "touts", did not cause much of a disturbance because it was considered by those in the know as a "strictly personal matter".

The fact, however, that the British, French, Belgian and Dutch Governments, and others as well, decided one day at Geneva to supply "their" refugees with travel documents did for a moment really upset the market. But when it also became known that the British Consulate in Paris would take months, the request having to be submitted to the Home Office and enquiries carried out in Paris regarding the political hue of the applicant, to grant such a visa on such an identity paper, while it could be obtained almost immediately on a passport provided by the Consul in Paris representing let us say, Honduras, Costa Rica, Guatemala, Ecuador, Nacaragua, Haiti or St. Domingo, the market was immediately on firm ground again.

Wealthier people could "obtain naturalisation" in Spain and Portugal with the aid of forged residence documents covering a period of ten years. Such passports carried more "prestige" than those obtained from the smaller States and thus offered greater "security". Although this state of affairs was a more or less well-known fact in Britain and France, their intervention was somewhat delayed and only took place when Canadian and British "passports" began to be offered on the international market.

One Government alone openly tolerated this passport traffic, since any method seemed desirable that would free it from one Jew more; the Hitler regime. Thousands of these passports were sent to Germany and made it possible for refugees to leave the country. Furthermore, the Gestapo even allowed interned Jews to leave the concentration camps with these passports and later, when it was more difficult to obtain one of these documents, with one of the visas obtained in the same way on the international black market for passports and visas. For once, therefore, the crooks who dealt in this traffic did more for persecuted humanity than all the international committees solemnly assembling at Geneva from time to time ever succeeded in achieving.

The Russian revolutionaries under the Tsarist system could not at that time, in their definition of a human being, foresee that this poor persecuted creature would really have four dimensions, the fourth, most recently discovered one being the visa. They could not foresee this because the mere fact that the Tsarist system had introduced passports for purely political reasons was already considered in the less backward countries as a direct

outcome of the knout complex. Who in 1900 could have gone as far as thinking of a visa?

The Russian revolutionary in 1913 who without difficulty entered Switzerland, the Scandinavian countries, France and also Britain would have given a superior smile at the idea of a visa being required; it would seem that not only Lenin and Trotsky, but also Stalin found the way to London, not to mention poor Litvinoff, who was in a position to compare Siberia with an ordinary democratic prison. The refugee of 1933, less revolutionary but more systematically persecuted, rarely had reason to smile. If he had a little money he made the round of the various Consulates. He was soon to find that at the French Consulates in Berlin, Zurich and above all Rotterdam (the Consul there being finally replaced because he had not been taking even the most elementary precautions), a visa could easily be obtained provided two conditions were fulfilled—the requisite “fee” and the right “pull”, which meant knowing the man “in” with the Consul; the fulfilment of one of these conditions alone was never sufficient in France.

When a measure was later introduced forbidding French consuls to issue visas without the special authorisation of the Quai d’Orsay a regular visa market was set up in Paris right in the Quai d’Orsay itself. Two officials were appointed to watch carefully that the good name of France, the more especially from the humanitarian point of view, was maintained. One of these was Loewenbruck, a kindly and upright man, who managed to maintain the good name of the country even in the most troubled times.

If one of the many agents at the Café Triomphe in the Champs Elysées wished to promise to help one of these poor Jews, willing to pay out his whole fortune to save a relative from the clutches of Heydrich or Frank, he would say, “I have the man for you, and it will only cost you . . .”, and keeping a calculating eye on his would-be customer he would mention a figure varying between 5,000 and 25,000 francs. The happy applicant quickly understood that he had at last found the man who could help him.

After Ribbentrop’s visit to Berlin in December 1938, visas practically ceased to be given to Czech or Polish Jews; no one was ashamed any more to explain why. Bonnet, Minister for Foreign Affairs, was already well aware before this visit of the rumours Goebbels’ agents were circulating, that the Communist-Jewish elements (at that moment the trinity had not yet been completed and the third member of this propaganda-alliance was

still waiting in the "plutocratic" refrigerator) were upsetting the good relations between the two countries. Bonnet already was furious at the fanatic Grynzspan having spoiled all his plans, so that he was still not in a position to present the French public with the same scrap of paper on which depended "peace in our time" that Chamberlain had succeeded craftily in hiding from Daladier and the whole world until the moment of his arrival at Croydon in an atmosphere of wild and delirious enthusiasm. Therefore, Bonnet himself gave the lead in this general change of policy at the Quai d'Orsay from 1938 onwards.

This change was in no way checked, as might have been expected, by the defeat of Poland; it might be said on the contrary to have been accentuated. It is a well-known fact that the Polish-Jewish Minister, the well-known Socialist Liebermann, who later died in London, was unable to obtain a French visa, while the other non-Jewish members of the future Polish Cabinet were granted them without difficulty. A number of well-known French and Polish people had to take strong action before a stop was put to this scandal.

It is less well known, but an equally historical fact, that on the very day that Liebermann's visa was refused the following happenings took place—a Polish Jewess, her daughter and son-in-law not only obtained the visas requested through an "agent" three days previously, but the Quai d'Orsay even telegraphed to the French Consul in Brussels and gave him cabled authorisation to issue the necessary visas for these three persons, whereupon the French Consul not only supplied the visas as instructed but cabled this authorisation to the Belgian Consulate in Warsaw, under German occupation at that time, so that the latter could draw up Belgian visas. This complicated procedure still functioned well, even across the frontiers of nations at war, and the prices were still fairly "reasonable" too. Furthermore, the three people in question reached France safely. They are now in Mexico.

It was, besides, generally possible to rely on any official who made a promise. There seemed to be a special code of behaviour in force, for it was made a point of honour not only to "deliver the goods" (that went without saying), but within the time limit arranged.

A few of the more cynical among the intermediaries—the classic grading being a Polish or Hungarian Jew, another one and another one, then a Frenchman, a Deputy or an ex-high official of the Quai d'Orsay or a retired ambassador, another official and finally "*the official*"—would say as an aside that were French officials always as honest and keen in other State

matters, the country must surely have had the finest administration in the world. They did not attempt to hide the surprise and admiration they felt at the official always "handing back" the amount held on trust by a third sincerely honourable individual, in the event of the affair for some unforeseen cause not coming to fruition, after he had taken his "fee". On such occasions they would exclaim ingenuously what a great pleasure it was to see the difference between a great country like France and the little Balkan States, where corruption was still in a wild and uncivilised state.

Only a few unfortunates who failed to find the right approach and fell into the hands of the real rogues believed themselves back in Tsarist times. It is regrettably true that, towards the end, Paris was swarming with out-and-out blackguards. But those who were lucky and found their way to de Monzie's Chambers, on the occasions of his not holding office in the Ministry of Works, could feel assured of success, although his reputation (nevertheless no one could accuse him of not having a sharp Gallic wit) suffered considerably from this type of occupation. But in any event his loyal friend Berthelot, Permanent Secretary to his Ministry, was always "on his side" and worked with him until he took his place under Vichy. De Monzie, moreover, was neither strict nor difficult about the question of fees; he was generous enough to allow an Austrian colleague who had no money to make him a present of an Old Master which he had saved from his Viennese collection.

Pierre Cathala's influence, much sought by rich refugee manufacturers, was only known to the few, and for that reason he was the greatest power among the ex-Ministers. His friendship, if not devotion, for Laval was well known in Paris; it was said by some to be the reason why his intervention was always successful.

The integrity of Chautemps, Herriot, Blum, Daladier and Reynaud was never questioned by anyone nor were their names ever connected with this type of scandal, but for that very reason, it might be said, their influence was somewhat restricted and only exerted in purely political cases. The integrity on the other hand of Marius Moutet, who did a lot for refugees and whose office was always flooded by them, was questioned by his enemies, although it is an undeniable fact that he never took a penny for his work in connection with visas or residence permits, since his only desire was to help these unfortunate people. Needless to say, his influence was almost nil even when he was Minister for the Colonies. Requests submitted by the "League for the Rights of Man" on behalf of political refugees and sup-

ported by Moutet were, from 1938 onwards, simply laid aside by the Quai d'Orsay or automatically refused. Had they granted these requests the officials concerned would merely have risked having their names coupled with "*Nos amis, les métèques*" (this was the heading of a special column in *Gringoire*, hideously attacking foreigners). By busying themselves with the others they were sure of obtaining a profit for themselves, and maintaining in spite of themselves the good name of France as a hospitable country, at least for paying-guests.

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#### CHAPTER XIV

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#### CORRUPTION

THE Préfecture of Police in Paris is a square block of grey construction consisting mainly of a large courtyard enclosed by four buildings instead of prison walls. By 1938 the fact that the Préfecture of Police was a French administrative institution intended to deal with French people and French affairs had been completely forgotten. From that time onwards the course of political events could be followed by counting the number of police vans coming into the badly paved courtyard of the Préfecture, with their daily load of foreigners arrested during mass raids or at their homes; or by watching the ever-increasing queues of foreigners in front of the various counters.

Every foreigner, in fact, coming to France had to present himself at the local Préfecture on his arrival. Since the majority of foreigners came first to Paris, it was easy to guess which of the smaller countries had just been invaded by Hitler, merely by listening to the language spoken in these innumerable queues. For although in many years the queues in front of these counters had scarcely changed in number, the language changed continually.

The last still to benefit from the former generous facilities were the first German refugees. These "generous facilities" were later to be talked about as purely mythical. The waves of refugees arriving in Paris from the autumn of 1933 onwards refused to believe that the procedure had been changed "entirely on their account": that it had previously been possible to pass under the arches of the Préfecture opposite the Flower Market, the air filled with the thousand scents of Paris in spring, to be politely directed towards the courtyard on the left, enter where

a large "F" was marked, fill in a questionnaire and a few minutes later leave the Préfecture the richer by a provisional document with photograph entitled "*Récépissé*", since it acknowledged a request for residence in France: that the enquiry envisaged never took place, but two months later a note would arrive stating that the *Carte d'identité* was ready, entitling the owner to two years' residence, later increased to three years, and could be collected at "any hour convenient".

Slowly the procedure changed, as though smothered in a thick flow of lava. Enquiries were, in the first instance, effectively carried out; policemen were sent to question the *concierge*, that nocturnal queen of Paris reigning over blocks of flats, before whom the refugees trembled in fear, since they knew their fate lay in her hands. The policemen would come back months later. Meanwhile the foreigner's torture had begun. "At any hour convenient" still appeared on every summons to the Préfecture in connection with the prolongation of the *récépissé*, although the queues in front of the counters were becoming longer and longer and more wretched. Yet finally, after the "investigator" had come back for the third time, even the dullest business man, who had meantime become a *débrouillard* refugee in Paris, understood what it was all about. The "price" fixed by these "investigators" was ridiculously low—100 or 200 francs each visit, and a few days after a "fruitful" visit the refugee would receive, as though by magic, a summons to attend "at any hour convenient", announcing that the enquiry had been favourably concluded. He would at last receive the document without which he could vegetate but not live in Paris; he had to have an "identity card" before he could be registered as a trader on the Commercial Register, and a copy of this registration had to be supplied to the local Commissioner of Police before he could start in business. Only malicious people could say that the French had no gift for organisation if they really set themselves to it and that things limped along. The unfortunate thing is that the Frenchman will only decide at the last minute in a case of absolute necessity, under the compulsion of events or self-interest, to abandon the improvised methods so dear to him. The refugee-*débrouillard* who had learned the Parisian art of "getting along" and "knowing the ropes" found that everything went beautifully in this police administration, better even, and certainly much faster, than in Germany, following Fouché's old recipe. Moreover, providing the universally accepted rule of greasing the wheels well and not letting the machinery rust was applied or, as the coachman in Balzac's *Le Curé du Village*



has it—" *Nous ne jouons du fouet que si les voyageurs jouent du pouce* "—the results were always satisfactory. Those who had learned how to make use of the right grade of oil at each stopping-place could easily reach the destination in view: an "identity card".

A refugee business man who wanted to make use of his money, form a company or buy a business, had first to find an "agent", generally a different one for each type of case, who could procure a "trader's card" for him. His position in the figurative sense was like that of a horseman trying to jump an obstacle in a slow-motion film; he would start off in fine style, and then the camera-man would stop, leaving the horseman suspended in mid-air until the camera started again; the horseman would start, stop, start off again and finally clear the obstacle and reach the post: inclusion in the Commercial Register. The only visible change was that the obstacles became increasingly difficult and the horseman could hardly clear them; while the camera-man claimed that the price of oil was going up and up as a result of the new "import" restrictions.

By 1937 it was difficult for even the ablest "agents" to bring an enquiry to a close, since the confidential directive of the *Sûreté Nationale* was in principle against the issue of identity cards to recently arrived refugees. Privileged refugees were now paying thousands of francs for a mere *récépissé* valid for two months, for one very good reason—the *Préfecture* after the arrival of the Austrians had introduced another administrative formula, an even less provisory document; the "perpetual summons". With the object of keeping these refugees in a very uncertain position so as to be able to lay hands on them at any moment "for infringement of laws concerning residence of foreigners in France", they were given summonses to appear on a fixed date, generally one week ahead, so that a week later they would be presented with another summons. More often than not they had to wait the entire day in one of the queues, the fore-runners, long before the war, in France (and even in England) of "the age of queues". (There was one marked difference, however, between the two countries, for a queue to the Frenchman is a barbarous, inhuman institution; but for the Englishman, or so it would seem, it is a week-end pleasure, even in peace-time. The Frenchman, having an inventive turn of mind, found an agreeable solution for the queue system at bus-stops; numbered tickets torn from a box established priority claims without fear of dispute.)

It could quite simply have been decreed that newly arrived

foreigners should be watched and should therefore present themselves every week at the Préfecture; but the weekly summons produced the same result while giving the appearance of legality. Here, again, it was the *façade* that counted, and the police administration managed in this simple way to save its face in the most bureaucratic country in the world. The "perpetual summons", the refugee's normal nightmare, haunted these "receipt-less" human hordes; this could change into an extraordinary nightmare in certain specified circumstances and for one whole night. If the queues were too long, or the officials felt too inert, a "cop" would arrive to inform the motionless mass that no more would be dealt with that day but that they should all come back the next day with their numbers (as at bus-stops there were numbered tickets, since everything concerned with police methods towards foreigners was ingeniously organised); "provided, of course, you're not picked up by our cyclists meantime", would be ironically added. Indeed, the extraordinary nightmare would start immediately. As the crowds dispersed, the mechanised "cops" in blue uniform would come up and ask for "your papers, please", for they always began by being very polite. The nightmare came to an abrupt end for the unlucky ones who were "nabbed", for they soon saw the courtyard of the Préfecture of Police again, but this time from the inside of one of the long blue vans which packed its passengers like sardines. Were this first trap successfully avoided, for it was nothing more than a shameful trap, there was no guarantee that an official would not knock during the night—or preferably at six o'clock in the morning—to ask for "your papers, please". The night and the nightmare could only draw to a close when the old place was found again in the queue, giving "security" during the day at least from the representatives of the Security Police.

There are always some privileged people under every system, whatever the conditions. Facing the entrance, right on the opposite side of the large courtyard, was a small office, handsomely furnished *à l'anglaise*, with a pretty secretary who announced her chief's rare visitors as though it were an office in the "City". Members of British and American Society, who had just finished admiring the perfume of the Flower Market and the typically Parisian atmosphere of the quays opposite the Préfecture, were, now inside, equally charmed by the typically French politeness. These were people who wished to remain in France for a few months and should, therefore, have queued up in front of the counters like "the others". This little office was a delicate

intimation from the French Republic that traditional French hospitality, unlike other old French virtues, had not been degraded to an empty myth whose memory was sedulously cultivated, but still existed in spite of "those in the queues".

American journalists, to the majority of whom Paris meant the Ritz or Chatham bar—as they often declared with pride in their papers or memoirs—knew nothing of France; for apart from occasionally interviewing the President of the Republic, or at least one of the numerous other Presidents, of the Senate or the Chamber, or of the different commissions of both Houses, from time to time the Prime Minister or just a plain minister, and then cabling their country that "the French army is the best in the world", or "the social crisis has been overcome in France, thanks to the courage of Daladier in breaking the General Strike of November 30th, 1938, as he quelled the riots of February 6th, 1934", or "it is now certain that there will not be a war in Europe", or broadcasting from the Maginot Line—"with the German lines only 300 yards away I can definitely state that the morale of the French soldier is excellent and boredom is relieved by numerous entertainments; there were no signs of discontent apparent even when the wine ration arrived as ice, frozen in the barrels"—they did not penetrate much into the real life of the people of France; knowing nothing of France they were somewhat surprised if one of their former acquaintances from Berlin, Prague, Warsaw or Vienna, humiliated and weary, asked them to put in a good word at the Préfecture since they "never had any trouble, good Lord!"

The wealthy refugee business men, whose ears still echoed with the couplet that Paul Morgan, later to die in Dachau, had chanted with sly spite to Stresemann, a couplet so expressive of the whole secret of success in Germany—"Tiefer bücken, tiefer bücken, wenn man was erreichen will" (Bow and scrape, cringe and fawn, that's the way to get there)—soon learned to hum another refrain, more Parisian in style—"Si l'on veut qu'ça file, plus d'huile, plus d'huile." (If you want to get things moving, grease the wheels.)

Kept well informed by their numerous connections, they could always assess the exact "value" of every individual of importance. They soon knew when the friendliness of some Commissioners (thanks to Chiappe at the Préfecture and not only very attached to Mussolini and Charles Maurras in their royalist hearts, but also very fond of Italian shoes and other presents for "Madame" brought by "grateful" admirers of France) could no longer be of any use to them. It did not take them long, either,

to learn that the influence of Commissioner Simon or Superintendent Louis, both incorruptible, was just sufficient to help, out of reverence for their names, some well-known foreigners to obtain a few weeks' residence in France without queueing before going to America, or to provide exit papers for the United States for Mr. Kerensky.

The wealthy business men were well advised when told they should avoid being seen with "political" people in the waiting-room of one of the powerful Commissioners of Police, since their case could easily become the pivot for some political intrigue and they themselves the mere victims of chance. Their sources of information were equally good when they learned that the bitter struggle between the Préfecture and the Sûreté Nationale in the Ministry of the Interior had been won outright by the higher authority and a successful outcome now meant "worming into" the Place Beauveau.

People of this kind always got on all right whoever was Commissioner at the Sûreté, whether the sly, crafty X . . . , always open to non-political "approach" by wealthy magnates, or Magny, well disposed towards foreigners provided they had a banker's introduction, or Bussièrre, Prefect by "profession", a qualification seemingly an excuse for every type of crooked political dealing and spineless subordination.

(Bussièrre became Prefect of Police in Paris under Laval, while Magny was Prefect of the Seine Department.)

The best informed foreigners, who were not only prepared to "grease the wheels", but wanted to be absolutely certain of success, approached an apparently unimportant intermediary who had only one advantage—his cousin had been for years at the Sûreté Nationale. This cousin was one of the few officials in the Ministry who was a Socialist. In spite of this "fault", he remained in his job under the Socialist Minister Salengro, reduced to suicide by *Gringoire*; the Socialist Dormoy, like his father the most ardent protagonist of the Republic, later assassinated by Vichy; the Radical-Socialist Albert Sarraut, and even the reactionary Henry Roy when the turn of events had become almost openly Fascist.

(His Secretary of State, the Right Wing Deputy Jacquinet, only decided to take the road to London in 1943, to find himself entrusted in Algiers with one of the most important offices of State, the Navy.)

He was the "type" of post-war Socialist in Europe who was a dishonour to his party, in every country. He was crafty, deceitful, wily, unfeeling, clever and very money-conscious. He

differed in this latter characteristic from his opposite number in Berlin, the famous Diels, who was a staunch follower of the party under the Severing régime, "the pride and hope of the German Socialists, their hard-headed strong man". (Severing certainly proved that his skull was hard, because he did not die when cracked over the head, but continued to vegetate with a State pension magnanimously granted by Hitler; the latter had, in fact, every reason to be grateful to a man whose immediate circle had carefully bolstered up the belief that he would "break" any attempt at reaction. Severing had "resigned", letting himself be driven out of his Ministry, not by Hitler but by his "John the Baptist" von Papen in the manner of "the lieutenant and ten men" suggested by the old Oldenburg-Januschau, while loudly protesting that "he only gave way before brute force". His second-in-command, the Commissioner of Police, the Deputy Commissioner, and Colonel Heimannsberg, Commander of the Police Force, all finished up on the same road to Moabit, the Central Prison in Berlin. Once installed there they raised a strong protest against this "despotic action" and ended towards the middle of 1932 by dragging this farce through the State Courts in Leipzig; yet there are people who still maintain that the Weimar Republic, which had even drawn up legal procedure for such cases of violence, was "not democratic".) Diels remained a mainstay of the party until it was discovered that he was doing very well for himself and passing on information to Goering; but when his case was due for hearing Goering had become his Chief and Diels himself head of the Gestapo, though not for long. Older Nazi members were indignant and refused to credit his sincerity, so he was relegated to the post of Police Commissioner for Cologne, still an "honourable" reward for the "small service" to Goering.

The Ministry of the Interior, in so far as it was concerned with the treatment of foreigners, could well be compared with the Augean stables. The unfortunates who came "unprotected" reached the Sûreté Nationale from the rue Cambacérès and entered the little courtyard, where a small glass building was reserved for foreigners. There were no queues formed in the courtyard here, but in the room itself. The unfortunates without influence and connections who found their way here in despair would see a few privileged people receiving preferential treatment. This more or less represented the first or lowest degree of bribery. These privileged people would appear again a few minutes later, beaming with delight, and be taken by a messenger to the rooms on the first floor. This represented the

second degree of bribery, to which, however, Camboulives, a Frenchman of the old school, with a kindly heart and genuine sympathy for the really poor refugees, and many others, were not open. As soon as the cousin had had his whack, the applicant could go straight to the first storey, where the messenger, informed as by magic of the intended visit, would smile and lead the visitor to a door. It would, however, have been very unwise, if not dangerous, to ignore the lower storey, where a jealous watch was kept on the perquisites from the common trough; for it could easily "hold up" a file or arrange things so that a favourable report would never reach the Préfecture.

It would have been stark madness to try and enforce a decision against the advice of officials instead of seeking their consent.

Berthoin, Secretary of State at the Ministry and the Minister's Permanent Secretary for many years, the representative of the Ministry "Cabinet" as opposed to the Sûreté (an important, refined distinction in the higher spheres of juggling in this Ministry which administered France) or Dubois, Secretary to Minister Sarraut, would often feel the weight of "their" extraordinary influence if they attempted to impose a Ministry decision in favour of a political refugee who had failed to find favour with "them".

The "cousin", moreover, with his clever cunning, created the finest diversion ever managed by a thief and definitely established his reputation. He shouted: "Stop, thief!" so loudly in public that nobody for a moment would have dreamed of suspecting him. He was able in this way to clean the Augean stables of all elements unfavourable to him and at the same time to supply the grateful public twice, in 1938 and 1939, with fine scandals, including the spectacular arrest of high officials in the Ministry and at the Préfecture on charges of bribery and corruption.<sup>1</sup>

Chavry, special commissioner for criminal detection on the fifth storey of the Ministry, supplied him with anything else he needed by arresting a dozen French and foreign lawyers, intermediaries and agents. Thus, to the great delight of the more sensational news-sheets, some startling trials on charges of traffic in passports, identity cards, exit permits and entry visas became the talk of the day, the most notorious of which was the Uri case.

These facts, however, should not lead anyone to believe that

<sup>1</sup> In December 1944 Minister Tixier compared the Ministry with the Augean stables and told the Consultative Assembly that he had to purge it almost completely, because it was full of corrupt Vichy elements.

the French administration was corrupt throughout from top to bottom. The widespread "don't care" attitude and red-tapism was generally far more pronounced and consequently far more pernicious than plain, open corruption. This was shamelessly apparent only in affairs connected with foreigners. In Britain, too, one can read of an official being charged with accepting bribes for favours granted to foreigners; such cases, however, did not merely appear to be exceptional, they really were the exception. In France, however, it was almost a miracle if a foreigner succeeded in obtaining an exit permit, a residence permit or an entry visa for a relation through the ordinary channels. Furthermore, no one would believe it, but would listen to the story with an understanding, indulgent smile. This was the cruellest and most tragic side of such a state of affairs. It would scarcely be necessary to point out that corruption under the Vichy system increased, probably to an abominable and unheard-of extent, so that even *Paris Soir* tried to appear indignant:

"Entrusted with verifying the sections and papers of the Jews resident in a Parisian district, this is how Inspector Ellers dealt with an individual named Jakob Finkel.

"He sought him out at his place of work; knowing his identity card to be out of order, he asked him to wait while he went to fetch two policemen. He returned to find that Finkel had jumped out of the window . . . on the ground floor and vanished. His 'identity card' was left behind. The Inspector took this and went to the culprit's home to find his wife, who described the interview as follows: 'He asked me for five thousand francs to return the card to me. I fell in with his proposal.' Unfortunately for Ellers, it was noted that several rolls of cloth had disappeared from Finkel's home after the visit. 'I took them home with me because I was going on leave. I would have handed them over to the police on my return,' the Inspector told Judge Reije in the presence of his lawyer, M. Pol. This is the usual excuse in similar cases."

Meanwhile, the wealthy refugee business men continued to visit the insignificant cousin and variably met with success. These visits did not cease even after the institution, in October 1939, at the Ministry of the Interior of the famous Commission to decide the fate of German and Austrian, as well as Czechoslovakian and Polish refugees (a great many were Jews), who had been arrested on September 4th, 1939, and sent to ghastly concentration camps. Some of them, especially the "former residents" of Dachau, who retained an almost fatalistic humour in spite of their misfortunes, claimed that these camps were worse, except that at that time, the winter of 1939, the inmates did not

die so easily or so often as at Dachau. Vichy, however, carrying the same line of action to its logical conclusion, only on a larger scale, hastened to repair this fault.

This Commission met every Thursday and dealt each time with about 50 files out of a total of approximately 15,000 people arrested. As if by a miracle, the wealthier business men were released first, while Hitler's opponents of long standing were not freed until January 1940, and then not for political reasons but, in the majority of cases, on the advice of the camp doctors. What was even more surprising, at least at that time, was that the "Aryans", whether German or Austrian, who were in no sense refugees but more often than not open followers of Hitler, were released in bulk for a variety of reasons. For the most part they went back to their old jobs, often in factories of national importance, where their presence was considered essential in the interests of "national defence". Jewish chemists, on the other hand, were only released much later, in spite of the intervention of all kinds of committees, including those of Paul Perrin, ex-Paris Deputy (a "victim" of the Popular Front, and hence veering towards Communism, to be "safer" in the next elections) and Emile Kahn, the incompetent, voluble, pretentious secretary of the "League of the Rights of Man".

Wealthy business men even made their way to the cousin to obtain entry visas although this was a matter for the Quai d'Orsay. But the opinion of the Ministry of the Interior was always requested. Such a visit was, therefore, never entirely fruitless. In fact, as if by magic, the file in question would be returned to the Quai d'Orsay within a few days instead of weeks or months later and, more surprising still, with a favourable report. This was the finest of the many wonderful results brought about by the intervention of the "cousin's" insignificant cousin.

The war, since all were to be united in a spirit of equality and fraternity against the common enemy, had temporarily abolished the difference in treatment for poor and wealthy refugees and the appalling queues in the courtyard of the Préfecture had consequently disappeared. Indeed, everyone was stowed away in equally bad "Prix-Unic" concentration camps.

This equality in misfortune was in no way clouded by the fact that the wealthier were released a few months sooner and almost all declared to be "unfit for the Foreign Legion". For on leaving the camp they almost all found themselves in the same position, and even a visit to "cousin's cousin" could scarcely in



principle help to overcome the new difficulty, the sequestration of their possessions.

Though the people in power may have been neglectful of the military and industrial preparation required in France, they could hardly be reproached with a similar laxity on the administrative side during the early days of the war. Every district in Paris, every Department in the north or east of France, was informed in advance where to go in the event of evacuation. The people in power, however, had not sufficient imagination to foresee the actual effect of a mass exodus in the event of a break-through; possibly they never envisaged such a possibility, or believed that any other evacuation would function with the same clock-work precision as that of the whole population of Alsace in 1939.

As far as the fate of enemy aliens was concerned, everything was foreseen. As early even as August 8th, 1935, the then Minister of the Interior drew up detailed orders which gave precise details for the arrest of enemy aliens and the sequestration of their possessions. Paganon, the Minister, was not a reactionary. He simply had not sufficient imagination to foresee that in 1939 his measures for paralysing enemy action in case of war could be employed with an entirely opposite effect. He could scarcely be expected to have had sufficient foresight to let the Council of Ministers decide there and then whether German or Austrian political refugees (who could have foreseen at the time of the Stresa Conference that there would be Austrian refugees in France in 1939?), or Jewish refugees, should be treated as Germans and enemies or as refugees under the protection of France.

Léon Blum, a wise politician, had profited from the mistake he made in 1932, when he predicted that Hitler would never come to power. With his clear-sighted perspicacity and penetrating intelligence, he was quick to understand the complexity of both the problem and the solution. To declare that Jewish refugees were not to be considered as German subjects, since Hitler had expelled them, would simply have been to accept the Teutonic racial theory. To treat them as Germans would have meant persecuting as enemies people ostensibly expelled for political or racial reasons who had found a refuge in France, so that these unfortunates would in such an event have been caught between two lines of attack and left with the choice of Scylla or Charybdis. His subtly philosophical temperament led him to find a clever expedient which is entirely to the honour of true French tradition. Every refugee arriving in France before August 5th,

1936, who had asked for a League of Nations travelling paper, on handing over his German passport was declared to be a political refugee, under the protection of France.

Léon Blum, however, that incarnation of humanitarianism as the finest French tradition has developed it, that intelligent man and upright politician, had overlooked the need for expounding his excellent proposals in as clear and detailed a form as Paganon, the practical man, had done. Léon Blum had simply decreed that a foreigner declared to be a political refugee coming from Germany should be entitled to a special *carte d'identité*. Unfortunately, he did not immediately define the exact extent of the protection from which such political refugees were to benefit. This was left for later interpretation by ordinance and bye-laws, which was never done.

Paganon, however, or rather those concerned with the drawing up of his decree, left nothing to chance, and it was signed in due form; its publication merely awaited D-Day, the declaration of war. Paganon had been dead for some time when the decree of August 8th, 1935, was published under his signature on September 4th, 1939. But this signature immediately destroyed all the hopes raised by Léon Blum's decree, those illusionary hopes on which political or Jewish refugees could still build their immediate future. The refugees not only had their remaining hopes destroyed by their arrest, another thing was destroyed, too—their entire possessions. It was, however, not only the wealth these refugees had brought with them from Central Europe or built up again in France (ultra-Nationalists might well have said: 'So much the worse for them, others are being hit much harder') that was lost by this hasty action: in destroying their wealth, France, whose hospitality changed in such sudden fashion, did quite as much harm to herself. Thousands of factories, stores, shops and other establishments run by refugees were closed or sequestered overnight. As happened during the last war, thousands of sequestrators found new sinecures at the expense of the refugees and to the detriment of France, since a portion of the national wealth was thus lost to the country. In many cases, too, work of national importance was seriously hampered. The officials empowered to deal with the closed-down firms, bearing in mind that liquidation of goods sequestered during the last war had not even come to an end by 1930, could easily resist all the proposals from all the cousins of all the "cousins" and retain their integrity, thus saving the honour of the profession. It is true that not one of the offers made could have approached the continuous profits they intended to obtain

for many years to come from the work itself, the so-called liquidation. Yet nothing is impossible, and the cousin could still bring off sensational victories when he discovered that one or another of the individuals doing well out of this affair had long hankered for the Legion of Honour rosette, choosing it in preference even to almost everlasting profits.

A few business men made their way in desperation to the State Prosecutor dealing with this matter in the Courts of Justice. They found him in his office nonchalantly playing with the fringe on the green curtains, saw him smile and heard him say: "But, my dear sir, one can always try. Let's see—in France everything can be ironed out" (*Voyons, en France tout s'arrange*). As the Judge of the Court, however, would never annul an order for sequestration without the agreement of the sequestrator concerned, and this gentleman never gave his consent, visits to the Prosecutor soon ceased.

The organisation here, too, was impeccable and with no fault in structure. No refugee could escape the net. If his name did not appear on the Préfecture's records it would certainly have a place in the Sûreté Nationale files; or if not there, on the list of their foreign customers that banks were compelled to supply to the Prosecutor's office. The banks, moreover, to avoid the possible risk of doing the wrong thing, simply refused to make payments in doubtful cases without the Prosecutor's special authorisation. Anyone who has actually seen the scheme in action, executed to the last detail with nothing left to chance, will attest that France has not deserved the bad reputation of lacking the talent of organisation. One could only have wished, at that moment—the beginning of the war—that this talent had been devoted to more fitting objects.

Hitler, at that time still a little fearful of what might be called "American reaction" and somewhat intimidated by the recall of the American Ambassador after the 1938 pogroms—a significant gesture that will always shine in the history of mankind—was allowing less and less money to leave the country, though refugees could still take with them a little and also their furniture, until finally he stripped them of the rest of their possessions, the label "Jew" being a sufficient reason. The Public Prosecutor of the French Republic had to execute the organised theft of the little Hitler had left the refugees—the label "enemy alien" being a sufficient reason. For this he was the more efficient in his zealous persecution of these "dangerous" enemies. He even sent his myrmidons to the homes of the poorest of the refugees with orders to seize their few wretched belongings; it thus hap-

pened that some of them on their release from the concentration camps returned only to find their homes empty, while others, even if they were luckier in that respect, nevertheless found their business ruined, since the whole of their money was frozen and sequestered.

These refugees, who in the main belonged to the *petite bourgeoisie* and business class, had heard often enough the word "No" and given often enough the answer "No". They were now to learn that one "No" could have a thousand and one meanings. "No" for the annulment of a sequestration order; "No" for an exit visa; "No" for a visa for America; "No" for release from a concentration camp; "No" for a gas-mask, reserved for French citizens. For every "No" there was a good reason. The phrase "in the national interest and for reasons of security" could be used to justify every action, whether good and necessary or merely stupid and harmful. Some of the refugees remembered Goethe's words—"A host of high-sounding phrases can be used, but the listener hears only the 'No' of refusal."

To a few they were even of some consolation.

Only when passing the medical examination, even the oldest and most decrepit of them, as "volunteers" for the Foreign Legion, which was the only certain way of getting out of the camp, did they hear the word "Yes". Yet they were delighted at this change of sound, especially those who had reason to fear that a "No" could only mean the concentration camp for them for the duration of the war.

Stripping these refugees of their possessions did not help to swell the national revenue, but on the contrary tended to weaken the economy of the country even more. Those profiteering by the measures, however, were delighted when they saw the pages of the *Journal Officiel* filled with details of new sequestrations.

These foreign business men were the first victims of the advantage taken by the reactionaries of this collective frenzy. Their downfall was the beginning of the end for the others, who were for the moment making capital out of a wonderful opportunity but were soon, under the Hitler-Laval "sweated" methods, to forget even the very meaning of the good old days' "good business", with the sole exception of those who were willing shamelessly to "collaborate" with the enemy occupants or go in for "black market" deals.

When some of these wealthier refugees did succeed in getting out, they had long ceased to hum "grease the wheels". The machine, now unmanageable, out of control and no longer

recognisable in its old form, had taken on an independent existence, like the Golem, and was refusing their "oil" in order to devour the men themselves. Those who managed to escape the monster's claws were fond of telling the following story:

The Russian Jew Orloff, who had financed the notorious Reemtsma tobacco firm in Germany (by undercutting and buying up the smaller manufacturers, evading taxation and bribing high officials, the pure "Aryan" brothers Reemtsma, became millionaires several times over), was invited by Marquet, the Mayor of Bordeaux, and one of those who helped to dig France's grave, to finance a petrol combine in the Bordelais area. Flattered by this mark of confidence, Orloff by 1934 had forgotten already his unfortunate experiences in Germany in 1933, probably because he had, in spite of everything, succeeded in saving quite a number of millions and thought he would always be able to do the same whatever the circumstances. In 1940, like Augustus reproaching the dead Varus with his *redde legiones meas*, he asked Marquet in vain for "my millions, my millions" and equally in vain for protection, since Marquet soon gave up the post of Minister of the Interior. By way of consolation, Marquet took him by the arm, saying: "My dear man, there is nothing more I can do for you. But in France one can always find an old proverb to fit each new event, which shows that everything here has happened before. For this moment I'll bring one up to date for you—'From time to time in France everything crumbles' (*De temps en temps, en France tout se casse*)."

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CHAPTER XV

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"TRAITORS" AND "INTELLECTUALS"

ON their arrival in France the refugee business men placed all their hopes on "this our 'second country' which has welcomed us so warmly". They did not come empty-handed, but brought their money, their knowledge and their kindly intentions with them. France could have refused them entry. However, they were welcomed with the impulsive enthusiasm characteristic of the simple, ingenuous, sympathetic spirit of the French, without thought to the material consequences of their humanitarian

gesture. The Frenchman is narrow-minded in material things; that is why his imagination has a wider range, his feelings are more magnanimous and his reasoning powers more developed. Yet as soon as his emotions begin to ebb as at low tide, as his imagination comes up against reality and his reason has to face up to daily problems, the fear of losing material advantages leads him to commit other instinctive actions, often scarcely reasonable and sometimes even childish, with a child's potential cruelty. This behaviour is closely connected with his almost inherent tendency to dodge problems for as long as possible.

While the pragmatic character of the Englishman leads him, especially during periods of national danger, to approach problems fearlessly, often without any accurate knowledge of the facts or the fundamental ideas directing them, and yet deal with them, that is to say to take action, though possibly with no definite outcome in view, the Frenchman, though well aware of the logical solution, continues to avoid problems, since being compelled to deal with them would raise too many difficulties in too many domains. Therefore, even when sinning, the Frenchman is still the innocent child. He invariably begins with a magnificent and magnanimous act and ends more often than not, without knowing why, in tragedy, as his history proves. France, therefore, had the best possible intentions with regard to these refugees, but—and it is a temptation to say naturally, or rather characteristically—everything came to a disastrous end.

When these people became victims once again, after having been guests for so long, they did not cry: "Cursed be France! see how she has fallen, like Zion the beautiful, like Jerusalem the proud." They shed tears and were filled with pity, far more on account of "lovely, suffering France, undeserving of such a fate" than because of their own misfortunes. They were totally unable to understand the dreary voice of an old man imbued with moral masochism and a Messiah complex who could only visualise the country's salvation through suffering. They were well aware, from their own earlier misfortunes in Europe, of the root of the evil. The majority of them saw disaster approaching without having the physical opportunity of escape.

By the autumn of 1939, in spite of censorship efforts not only to muzzle people's mouths, but deaden their minds, a few British newspapers discovered and published the extent of this fateful tendency then paramount in France. They did not hesitate "to intervene in the home affairs of another country", in this case an ally, and rail against the unjustified, or at least deliberately

exaggerated, measures taken against the refugees. They maintained the same outlook that it is an ally's right, even duty, to question another ally's actions should such actions seem liable to be harmful to the common cause. They were quick to appreciate that such actions were scarcely consistent with the humanitarian spirit in the defence of which they were all supposed to have taken up arms against the spirit of destruction. They also saw that then, at least, such measures would give Goebbels an excellent opportunity of making very effective propaganda capital out of them—"See what happens, you simpletons, to those who were opposed to our Führer and put their trust in our enemies. They managed to escape our camps, but finished up in French ones! Our enemies never keep their word, not even to refugees, though they are their natural allies. This would be your fate, too, in the event of defeat!"

The British papers did not dare, even if they actually foresaw and feared such a development in 1939, to express their fears that France under the screen of the Third Republic was in the process of introducing totalitarian methods into public administration.

Clare Booth has written a book, *European Spring*. It is one of the best ever written about France, and a testimony that the author has tried to fathom the mind and spirit of the French and been to a high degree successful. Yet Clare Booth only knew, really thoroughly knew, one France and not the two. She moved among the governing classes and the caste in power, which were, it is true, beginning to exert an increasing influence over the disappointed and consequently apathetic masses. (A psychologically propitious moment and an indispensable factor for the introduction of Fascism.) It is doubtful if Clare Booth would still accept to-day the evidence and information supplied by de Chambrun, a descendant of La Fayette, and therefore American by birth and Laval's son-in-law, with the same enthusiasm as she did in 1940. For these reasons it might be said that it is true and at the same time not true when she writes:

"... the continued observance of a mode of government which many influential Frenchmen now felt was either obsolete or woefully inadequate in a growing world of progressive totalitarianism. Indeed the cause of international democracy has been thrust on France at the very hour when all her instincts pointed to fervent nationalism and her real self-interests could best be served by both present and post-war totalitarianism."

The *bourgeoisie*, it is true, frightened by the demands of a

class conscious of its strength and aspiring to equality of power in the State, realised the moment had arrived when harsh measures alone, in other words Fascism, could quell such an urge. It is equally true that in sheer self-interest the *bourgeoisie* preferred Fascism in all its beastliness to giving up one iota of power. It is not true, however, that "France" had such tendencies. It was only "the other France", the bad, evil, inhuman, reactionary *ci-devant* France that had almost instinctively retained these tendencies from the time of the "Grande Révolution". This was the France that was to hail Hitler, who had proclaimed his aim of destroying the foundation of this revolution in Europe. This "other France" and Hitler were natural allies from the start. The same "nationalists" of the Maurras and Barrès type who had been preparing for revenge since the days of General Boulanger and the "Affair Dreyfus" and lost to their opponent, the "true France", followed precisely in the footsteps of the "Coblentzards" and Thiers and conveniently forgot the "hereditary" enemy at the very moment when this same "system" was openly proposing, for the first time for a hundred and fifty years, to destroy totally all that the French reactionaries had failed to do in their numerous abortive counter-revolutionary attempts.

That the people of France had an instinctive bent towards the totalitarian system is quite untrue; the little people were bewildered and did not understand what was happening.

The *bourgeoisie* had so fogged the public mind, conducted the affairs of the nation so badly and ruined the country's resources to such an extent that it could now attempt to hold up a glowing mirage of the happenings on the other side of the Alps or the other side of the Rhine—a mirage of false splendour where false values, rejected since the beginning of the century, now held sway again. As a patient whose doctor has prescribed carefully measured doses as a cure, turns during a painful attack to a charlatan who had long waited to administer his fatal potion, so France agreed during a period of convulsive hysteria to swallow such a fatal medicine of the kind; but, contrary to the belief of Clare Booth, the people's instincts were actively roused and had to be chloroformed by the charlatans.

While the refugees and those who managed to reach the democratic countries generally abstained from blaming France and continued even in their misfortune to show their deep attachment to the country, there were no small number of French people more than prepared to do the dirty work.

They attacked, maligned and cursed France, castigating her



institutions, railing against the administrative methods, branding outrageously the corrupt character of the "system", drawing an absurd caricature of the ordinary Frenchman, describing the "degenerate" way of life of the people, concerned only with amusements and pleasure. Their venom was born of furious impotence, which in a fratricidal struggle alone could inspire hatred to such a degree.

Their vicious attacks were so outrageous that no non-French person could ever have dreamed of concocting such distortions from a mere grain of truth.

Their heartless cynicism rouses such a feeling of compassion for France that one hesitates to give, before history, even a true and unbiased analysis of the real defects and dangerous faults of the Republic and the "system"—its institutions, its administration, and also of the people as a whole.

Clare Booth ironically remarks that "it is, of course, a little too simple to explain the fast collapse of world capitalist economy in terms of a perverse love of pleasure, but no matter how true it may have been of France before September, it was certainly not true after".

This irony is a cloak for her remarkable appreciation of the real problems and the fear of approaching them. The same understanding inspires the phrase dealing with the many "traitors": "To call all or any of them traitors for their presence there at the moment Hitler chose to crash the party is too easy an explanation."

Indeed it would be too simple to dub "traitor" people like Déat, contributor and later editor-in-chief of *L'Œuvre*, the Radical-Socialist Party paper with a Left tendency—for "intellectuals" (the most worrying fact is that the honest Albert Bayet and the famous "Cassandra" Geneviève Tabouis continued to write in it even after the Cognac magnate Hennessy had brought it up and slowly changed its course; did they not see what man had noticed long before the whole thing burst with Déat's infamous article, "Must we die for Danzig?"; did they perhaps think they could operate as an antidote to the poison doing so much harm? or did they whose mere presence deceived the "intellectual" public not have the moral courage to quit, even after this defeatist article had shaken the world? were they dupes and not free from guilt?); Pierre Dominique, editor-in-chief of *République*, Radical-Socialist Party paper with a Right tendency; de Monzie, editor of the *Modern French Encyclopedia*; de Brinon, editor-in-chief of the heavy industry journal *L'Information*; Jean Luchaire, editor-in-chief of *Les Nouveaux*

*Temps*; Jacques de Lesdain and Robert de Beauplan, contributors to *L'Illustration*, the most fashionable illustrated weekly; Stephane Lauzanne, of the *Matin*; J. Prouvost, owner of *Paris-Soir*, one of the most dangerous outstanding defeatists in the decisive days of June 1940; and a host of other intellectuals.

In September 1944, the National Committee of Men of Letters decided that all the authors who had given moral or material help to the invader or Vichy should be forbidden to publish anything again. The published list of such authors contains more than a hundred names, among them quite famous writers, representatives, before the war, of French culture and members of the *Académie Française*. Here are some of the names: Benoist-Mechin, Abel Bonnard, Minister for Education under Vichy; Pierre Benoit, Henri Bordeaux, René Benjamin, who was much liked in France for his sharp Gallic wit and his colourful descriptions of scenes in the Courts; Henri Béraud, F. Céline, who won world fame before his last books, even before the war, turned into foul-mouthed anti-Semitic obscenities; Châteaubriant and Henri de Montherlant, both famous novelists. Châteaubriant was always a fanatical French Nazi, but Montherlant was a strong anti-Munichite. Why did he turn his coat, since his book about the crisis in 1938 proved that he was very politically conscious and not at all a poet, pure and simple, living only for art? Others are less known but nevertheless had a considerable public among them: Jacques Chardonne, Camille Vauclair, Georges Claude, Félicien Falaise, Drieux La Rochelle, Georges Montandon and B. Fay. Pierre Dominique, Abel Hermant, the "shining light" of the *Académie*, Luchaire, Lesdain, Charles Maurras, also on this list, represented definitely a certain stratum of French *bourgeois* thinking and living. Bernard Grasset was one of the best known publishers. In 1930 already he had published, with a foreword by himself, Friedrich Sieburg's book, *Dieu, est-il Français?* La Fouchardière of *L'Œuvre*, comparable for the English reader to Beachcomber, Shy or Hickey, often aroused indignation, under the Republic, by his strange, almost Fascist remarks cloaked in a democratic sheepskin. He too, as well as poets like Paul Fort, Georges Binaux, Francis Lévy, Rivet and the painter Maurice Lafont, is on the list. In a second list published some time later, several names included in the first could no more be found, even those of P. Fort and H. Bordeaux.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately, the number of writers who have taken an active

<sup>1</sup> A list of collaborationist journalists was published in Nov. 1944. More than 250 out of 1,100 have been excluded from the *Maison des journalistes*.

part in the Resistance has not yet been published. Other writers who have been "sitting on the fence", the eternal *attentistes* now wish, *après coup*, they had been more courageous; some, however, seem to congratulate themselves for having been "ever so clever".

Is it forgotten that those like Carbuccia and Béraud<sup>1</sup> of *Gringoire* only continued, as they proudly proclaimed, a policy that they had openly preached every day for many years under the Republic? Is it forgotten that a Béraud could write in 1935 that "Britain should be reduced to slavery", and that the only salvation for France would be to adopt a "continental policy" with Hitler against Britain in terms almost identical with those in which the *Vossische Zeitung* of the Ullsteins, under the pen of Georg Bernhard, was propagating under the Weimar Republic the *Kontinentalpolitik* of a beaten Germany in collaboration with France and Russia?

Is it forgotten that these papers did not merely express the opinion of a small minority, but, in fact, corresponded to a current increasingly prevalent among the *bourgeoisie* as a whole? The hateful rag *Gringoire* managed to get rid of half a million copies a week.

It would be too simple, too, to argue whether the *clerics*—the intelligentsia in France did, or did not, betray the country without first asking: "which side were they on?"; or better: "was there an intelligentsia as an entity and a collective notion?"

It is a fact that only Pertinax, de Kerillis, Buré, Geneviève Tabouis and Elie-Bois of the well-known journalists took the road to exile; the majority of the others "collaborated" more or less openly.

This picture is in no way altered, however sad and frightening it may be, by an attempt to stress the adroitness with which a sick Valéry remained silent or an André Gide published two-edged articles in *Le Figaro*, whose editor-in-chief, Lucien Romier, became a pillar, Wladimir d'Ormesson a diplomatic representative of the Pétain-Laval set-up, and whose publicity director, Jules Poirier, was arrested before the war for his relations with Abetz and "intelligence with the enemy".

Is it easy to forget, that like Suarez, Briand's renowned biographer, a host of other writers and journalists of the "enlightened Right" or "advanced Left" were soon writing again either "to make a living" or, if cynical, "by conviction"? There were no great difficulties in proving their conviction, since

<sup>1</sup> Condemned to death, but reprieved in January, 1945 (life imprisonment).

many of them had already disparaged the Republic with its "abuses" more or less openly long before the disaster.

It was much more grievous to see people like Jean Piot, contributor to the *Canard Enchaîné* and *L'Œuvre*, hesitate, or La Fouchardière turn definitely to this company. It must be admitted that France passed through a phase of civil war without open bloodshed, which was interrupted from outside and temporarily, under Pétain, concluded in favour of "the other France"; the majority of the "fine spirits" had long ago chosen—the other side of the barricades, actively; or, what is worse, by remaining silent.

Had there been only Maurras, Béraud, Luchaire, Déat, de Brinon, or the like, or politicians such as Spinasse, Belin and de Monzie, or actors like Guitry, Lucienne Boyer, Arletty or Duchêsne, or servicemen such as Dentz, Noguès, or Vuillemin (like Vallin, Vuillemin prudently "surrendered" to de Gaulle, certain that he would promptly be "absolved" from blame for lack of preparation for the air war, with a rank just below his former one instead of being tried by the People's Court, while those who "surrendered" to Giraud seemingly remained "traitors" in the eyes of the Gaullists), had these "intellectuals" not been in the majority and the others, courageous, far-sighted and intrepid, only a small minority, it might be possible to suggest "mental aberration". Were such the case, there would be no necessity to point out that this state corresponded, as the superstructure, exactly to the economic, social and political infrastructure. As though troubled day and night by a bad conscience, they tried to convince themselves that their motive was "the good of the country", while others were proud of having chosen "Prague instead of the ruins of Warsaw"; in short, following in the wake of Greece, which eventually "conquered" Rome, and boastful of having abandoned out-of-date ideas like "country" so as to become part of a "great European family". It is, moreover, possible that they were subconsciously haunted by the old dream of a "European nation", since they attempted to excuse Hitler's barbarous methods by maintaining that only the adoption of Nietzsche's maxims could make it possible for "Bonaparte's task", hindered and checked by the French peasantry, to be accomplished by the Germans. The blossoming of such mud-stained blooms is less surprising if due account is taken of the great influence exerted on the French intelligentsia by Nietzsche, with his "superman", and the noisy musician Wagner, although the latter was frankly detested by German intellectuals. Even a man like Duhamel, with a characteristically Latin mind, rational

and peaceable, though not very far-seeing, could not escape these influences, as he admits in his book, *The White War*:

"It seems that suddenly this nation, for long the home of genius, renounced its former virtues to turn towards military glory and the conquest of material possessions. The last great men of this old Germany, Nietzsche and Wagner, were born and grew to manhood prior to the rise of this New Germany, infected with megalomania, greedy and warlike. It has been said that they helped to infect her with the fever and hypnotise her, but this is happily not certain. A people who wish to leave the path of reason will always find their prophets, even if they have to garble texts."

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CHAPTER XVI

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*THE REPUBLIC'S DETRACTORS*

In 1939 Duhamel sadly criticised the state of mind prevalent in France, conscious of his inability to change the course of things to come:

"But the thought that at such a tragic moment, when any false move, any clumsiness, will most certainly be exploited by an implacable adversary; the thought that the political groups are pursuing their card-table intrigues as in the palmiest days of peace; the thought that heartless schemers are arranging counter-revolutions round portfolios and jobs; the thought that this pleasant little game is going on under the attentive eye of the enemy—this thought both exasperates me and fills me with despair.

"I am quite aware that in France love and politics are the poor man's pleasure."

But here is a venomous picture of the "Frenchman, 1900 vintage, with his paunch, his ridiculous way of life and the misery of the *régime*", as seen by *Candide*, worthy rival of *Gringoire* and *Je suis partout*:<sup>1</sup>

"For a hundred years or more he had strayed far from the gracious nobility of outlook that had won him a foremost place in European culture. He had become common, his interests limited to music-halls, races, cards, cafés, angling, cheap novelettes, bawdy houses and doubtful parties. His former military courage had faded into purposeless bluster. Frivolous and inconsequent like his

<sup>1</sup> Robert Brasillach, editorialist of this weekly, was condemned to death in January, 1945, and executed.

ancestors, this charming inconsequence was no longer stabilised by common sense in public life. He was stuffed to bursting-point with false ideas, imported for the most part from England, and in Europe's public square he all too often made a sorry spectacle of himself, and the aged people he symbolised, blindly running his head against a wall, so that the spectators were always wondering with amusement—'Will he crack his skull this time?' He was, in short, an extraordinary mixture of the down-trodden revolutionary and the artist, the last of a race delighting in his decadence, yet at the same time boastful of his ancestors and their exploits.

"He was an unpleasant type, this Frenchman with his hard black hat, his complicity of ideas with tricksters, his rotten intrigues in the streets, alleys, cafés, his vulgar speech. . . .

"Dead though they were, they nevertheless lived as an inspiration. It was they who produced, as flowers spring from an untended plot, the men and supermen in which the French garden abounded. Thus they led France by their own virtue, vitalised by the exceptional virtue of the few with life.

"But once again, the people as a whole widened the gap that separated them, spurning their past, denying their own great spirit, dragging their glory in the mud. They sought their leaders among the political mountebanks who spouted a narrow village-green policy and gave them a cheap-jack education, so that their outlook was limited to their table and bed. . . .

"This aged, enfeebled State saw a Spartan youth; for that is the only apt word, a youth that was to build an army, in fact two youths to the East and South who were to build two armies, rise up beyond its frontiers. It did not for a moment occur to the wretched victim that modern states would rise, hard and implacable, face to face with whom he, poor-degenerate, could not stand a chance. It never entered his head, not even for a moment, to get rid of the men with the hard black hats and the ridiculous moral, intellectual and physical relics of pre-war life.

"To think of the French people in the years after the war, from 1919 to 1939. Fate gave them twenty full years in which to find themselves and rejuvenate themselves through sport, war-like deeds and by developing their Empire. After a victory which should have showed them exactly what they were worth in the realms of patience, tenacity and heroism, with endless examples of heroes and saints all around them, and all around them too examples of moribund nations refusing to die, rising up and coming to life again, still they did not understand, did not even spare a glance, but slept, drank, ate and thoughtlessly threw those twenty years away. . . .

" . . . so thoroughly that the French went to the slaughter-house like sheep, crazy, suicidal sheep, but nice and fat, with thick coats of wool, sheep who wanted the slaughter-house and asked for the butcher. That is how I see the long processions to the Bastille, a delight for the philosopher, a tragedy for the historian. And when, to add a blood-red touch to the picture, a few idealists tried to raise

France again with a whiplash in justified revolt on February 6th they were fired upon and their faces were ground in the dust. . . ."

"In short, two crimes to the credit of Daladier and his friends, firstly for not having saved us from the muck heap, but on the contrary having pushed us deep into it for twenty years; secondly for not having understood that France, with Atlantic as well as Mediterranean interests, was turned towards the West and the South and had sought her livelihood in those directions, with her back to the Rhine and her face to the sea, having asked her Eastern neighbour, for whom nothing, after the Saar plebiscite, could have made better hearing—'Are we in agreement? Every man to his own, every man for himself!'"

Yet even this "mud-slinging" was not enough, the shameless author dared to add a threat—"Two crimes were committed, a grave responsibility for a small group of politicians, whose scope was as limited as a gosling's and who turned France first into a farmyard and then into a cemetery and prison. Two crimes, for which punishment has not yet been meted out; but it certainly will be, for justice is alive and armed . . ."

Other newspapers and magazines delighted in the same sordid style, as for example *Les Nouveaux Temps*, which mentioned "all these by-products of the Third Republic and its Parliament under the orders of the great combines and foreigners, its army disaffected by masonic intrigues, its administration, where the only grounds for advancement to higher office were weakness of character".

Yet everything went very badly under the *francisca*, Pétain's Fascist emblem, so they then after so many years blamed the unfortunate mistakes "dear" to the red-tape officials of the Republic for this descent towards the abyss—"The head was sound, but the cadres were rotten."

It would be a grave mistake to believe that such venomous, unhealthy, hysterical, exaggerated criticism, which made not the slightest effort to get down to the root of the problem, was only to be found on the "traitors'" side. Harsh, bitter criticism or censure would rouse no surprise provided it were animated by the sincere wish and intention to construct a Fourth Republic on a healthier, more stable, more social if not Socialist, and sounder basis. But on reading the confessions of a member of the Resistance, *Les Cahiers Politiques* (published in France, January 1943), doubts might well be raised—"The Resistance is fighting for the Republic—not, it is true, for the Third Republic. The ignominy, absurdity and treachery of the Vichy system have not made the men of the Resistance either forget or forgive the

cowardice, inability and corruption of the men of the Third Republic nor the ignominious degeneracy of the system. The Resistance is fighting for the Republic itself."

It might well be wondered whether this purified, renovated Resistance outpouring in the Maurras style were not attacking, in spite of everything, the democratic Republican system—"the Republic itself".

Made wary by so many precedents in modern history, there is a risk of becoming too suspicious, for the same article shows a clear understanding for the double aspect of the French soul as well as its limping gait in a State where the two Frances stood for a century separated and divided, uncompromising and irreconcilable. "The working classes, after their first stunned stupor, regained their Republican spirit in the ordeal through which they were passing, while the *bourgeoisie* took up their stand behind Vichy. The most wavering supporters of the Republic in the Resistance movement must thus allow themselves to be drawn along by this wisdom and general firmness of purpose."

In *Volontaire* of July 1943 Poimboeuf expressed the Christian point of view:

"Foreign critics had just enough knowledge of our country to be led astray. They were generally led to judge without much indulgence. We delight, or most of us do, in enlarging upon our lack of unity and callously, almost cynically, exaggerating our vices. The Vichy system, and it would be difficult to decide whether it was more hateful than stupid or more stupid than hateful, made prodigious efforts to foster this regrettable reputation. To hear its protagonists, and especially the most ostentatious of them, who was by no means the youngest, France had become a nation of straying, indolent, lazy sheep. Her punishment at the hands of virtuous Nazi Germany came just in time for her to get better after making expiation. . . ."

"The evils from which our country suffered were numerous and varied. The democratic institutions, which had never reached full development, had degenerated into the loud volubility of ineffectual parliamentarianism, with little interest in the authority essential for government or in the equally necessary responsibility of the men in power. It is true that the blind mingling of different greeds and interests obsessed and smothered even the thought of the common good. The rise of short-lived politicians wallowing in stagnant party pools, and the closer the party kinship the keener the rivalry, seemed completely to have destroyed any hope of great statesmen. The everlasting ministerial crises tended to ruin the prestige of the State at home and abroad. And so for these reasons there was no definite and respected line of conduct apparent either for home or



foreign affairs. Inevitably, therefore, to quote a famous phrase uttered by one of our best known parliamentary speakers, our policy was to drift like a 'burst dog with the current'. In economic and social spheres, not one single government had dared attempt to instil real order by lopping capitalist abuses, building up an organised economy, giving authentic status to the professions and trades instead and in places of this strange *code du travail*, a somewhat heteroclite collection of social laws, often passed in a hurry and without conviction by the Chambers, which could not refuse from time to time to grant some little satisfaction to the organised workers. . . ."

"As for the French *bourgeoisie*, they were in exactly the same position as the nobility on the eve of 1789. Tired of existing without any real power, they could only protest, keep what they could and occasionally come to the fore to lead. Yet how many of their sons, who were the mainstay of the active and reserve army lists, proved quite unsuitable as leaders!

"The French family was dangerously divided by the fatal growth of individualism and self-interest, by a love of comfort which destroyed all feeling of generosity and public responsibility, by apathetic resignation and lack of resistance, by increasing immorality on the streets, in the theatres, in entertainments and in the Press."

" . . . The French, it was said, were well on the way towards losing all sense of national feeling and patriotism. There was no doubt a certain amount of truth in this, but an even nearer approach to the real facts would be to admit that they took their country, democracy and freedom for granted, regarding these things in the same way as a healthy man who only appreciates his earlier well-being when he falls ill. The reverses suffered during the war, the unprecedented shame of the Armistice, the suppression of all free thought, the methodically progressive robbery, the resultant famine, as well as the many vexations, privations and persecutions, culminating in the slavery of compulsory labour and deportation, all caused the people of France to reflect. Having cruelly missed them, the people learnt to know the true meaning of civilisation and *la patrie*—the incarnation, somehow, of that civilisation—and all that it represents both morally and materially. Unity immediately appeared eminently desirable, and came to the fore as a weapon not only against the enemy, but for the revival or return of the spiritual or material blessings that the enemy had denied or removed. . . ."

This analysis of the evils which ravaged "lovely France" calls to mind similar reproaches in the magnificent style of one of the greatest authors reared by this so often tortured but ever-radiant country. In *Le Curé du Village*, one of his finest books, unless *study* be a better word, Honoré de Balzac pictures, after the famous three days of July 1830, this conversation between a judge, a priest and a doctor:

"Patriotism is only now to be found under grubby shirts. Therein lies the loss of France. July means the acquiescent defeat of the highest ranks in name, fortune and talent. The devout masses have won a victory over the wealthy, intelligent classes to whom devotion to a cause is abhorrent. . . ."

"This change is the premium paid to the evil devouring us, to individualism."

"France, a country too eloquent not to be over-voluble, too filled with vanity to recognise true talent, is the very last, in spite of the sublime good sense of its language and masses, where the system of two deliberating assemblies should be attempted."

"The French peasant has no other passion, no other desire, no other wish and no other ambition than to die a property owner. This desire is an outcome of the Revolution and the result of the sale of national possessions."

"The moral effect (of the division of property by inheritance) is worse than the material results. We are producing beggarly land-owners among the people, semi-scholars among the *petits-bourgeois*; the idea of every man to his own, every man for himself, showed its effects on the upper classes in July this year and will soon infect the middle classes as well. A proletariat devoid of feelings, with no other god than envy, no other fanaticism than the despair of hunger, with no faith and no creed, will advance and tread the heart of the country underfoot. Foreign countries, risen to power under a monarchy, will find us with royalty without a king, with a legal system without laws, with property without owners, with elections without a government, with free will without strength, with equality without happiness. Let us hope that before that time comes there may arise in France a man of providence, one of the elect who will inspire nations with a new spirit and, whether a Marius or a Sulla, whether from below or on high, who will rebuild society."

It would not be in the least surprising to learn one day that Hitler, who was a great reader and purloined ideas wherever he could, had read this conversation. It may be remembered that in his *Blut und Boden* policy he decreed that a peasant's eldest son should inherit the land in entirety, as was the case in France before the Revolution. And on reading Balzac's century-old words, how reminiscent they seem of the phraseology adopted by the "leaders of the French peasantry" like Dorgères and other Fascists and semi-Fascists!

"To-day still as in the past jealous mediocrity is allowing the thinkers and great political doctors, who have studied the wounds of France and are in opposition to the spirit of their century, to die of poverty. If they resist poverty, we ridicule them or treat them as dreamers."

"In France, there is a revolt in the moral domain against the great man, as there is in the political domain against the sovereign."

"There will be upheavals in the country, which will certainly hold up the progress of France for a long time."

Yet in spite of the fears expressed in 1830, and in spite, too, of her biological state, which continued to deteriorate, France still had the physical and moral force to produce, to conquer, and to give to the world.

Faith in the country should be strengthened by the memory that the "true France" has never abdicated for long in the history of the nation, even though "the other France" has at different periods caused "upheavals in the country, holding up the progress of France for a long time", and the knowledge that Fascism, in spite of Mussolini's bluster of fighting to the last breath, is to disappear in ridicule just as Boulanger's attempt degenerated into a sentimental tragi-comedy. There is, therefore, less reason for alarm at the unconsidered phrases of some cowardly politicians in their abortive attempts to win back their irretrievable prestige by a revival of old-style tub-thumping than some genuinely suspicious Socialists seem to think, for they tend to consider "detractors of the Third Republic" even those whose object in pointing out the past evils is motivated by the sincere hope that this time the people themselves will carry out the major operation that the patient, France, requires.

Less alarm should be felt at the activities of these "detractors of the Third Republic", whose efforts obviously intend to belittle democracy and the Republic itself; because this time the "true France" of the Resistance has proved that she will tolerate no substitute, no senseless actions, no idle use of meaningless words and phrases, no attempt to prevent—this will be the last opportunity before history—the complete physical, moral, economic, social and hence political regeneration of this precious member of the European family and the blossoming of the eternal virtue of the "people of France".

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CHAPTER XVII

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*LAND OF SANCTUARY*

APART from the influx of workers who were the most useful for the country, the adventurers and crooks who were the most harmful, and the business men and intellectuals who should have helped towards the expansion of French economy, wave after wave of political emigrants came to France from 1920 onwards.

In the good old days of the Popular Front when "idealist" politicians, novices in the art of government, believed that an improvement in working-class social conditions could be achieved simply by the perfect functioning of the legislative machinery without the real forces in opposition being materially or morally crushed to meet the fulfilment of the new laws, Socialist speakers, inspired by the eternal ideal of the freedom of mankind, often raised their voices on behalf of the political refugees in Paris, whose position was already fast becoming critical.

These speakers almost always opened with the solemn words—"France, the traditional land of sanctuary . . ." without taking the trouble to give closer thought to this phrase, which had, in fact, become a mere slogan and was at one and the same time both true and false. Had they done so, they would possibly have committed fewer stupidities in their practical policy, that is to say in their struggle against the forces in opposition, the struggle between the two Frances that has continued without break. They would have discovered that the France of the pre-Revolution period was not the traditional land of sanctuary, but the one country which, on the contrary, sent the largest number of political refugees, consequent on civil and religious wars, first to the lands where the right of sanctuary had been developed to the letter and to the full since the thirteenth century, Holland and Brabant, and later, the Huguenots, to Brandenburg and Britain.

In the days of antiquity, we find the right of sanctuary was an accepted institution among the Semitic tribes, even on the tablets of Hammurabbi. But Moses made it a law, mitigating the cruel law of retaliation, by indicating the famous Seven Cities beyond the Jordan where a man who committed an unpremeditated crime could seek refuge from the anger of the victim's family. Roman law (Italy later becoming the home of the vendetta) never recognised the right of asylum. Rome always made the demand in

peace treaties that political enemies should be handed over; Hannibal committed suicide to spare his Semitic host the shame of being compelled to break the old sacrosanct law of hospitality.

Vichy has always worshipped Rome.

Is that, perhaps, the reason why the most utterly shameful clause in the Armistice of 1940, the extradition of political refugees to Himmler, did not weigh too heavily on Pétain's conscience?

It is, however, certain that Rudolf Hilferding (a Galician Jew, naturalised German, a famous student of Marxism and one-time Reichsminister of Finance, who was extradited by Pétain and handed over to the Gestapo with Breitscheid, Socialist Deputy and untiring candidate for the office of Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs) did not commit suicide in the Santé prison in Paris for the same reasons as Hannibal; for one thing, the act of extradition was already agreed when he killed himself; for another, it would have been an impossible task to save Vichy's honour by the scrupulous delicacy of committing suicide *before* crossing the demarcation line! Vichy would most certainly have regarded it as "barbarian" or in non-compliance with the spirit of the New Order to have the same scruples as Hannibal's host.

The Teutons, on the other hand, Tacitus' "barbarians", used as a scapegoat by malicious individuals in an attempt to cover the economic misdeeds of capitalism by a lust for bloodshed in the public mind, had always acknowledged the right of sanctuary, *Freistatt*. (Hitler did away completely with this institution, possibly because he feared in this sphere, as in the case of the Christian religion, that such a fatally humanitarian influence had already had its effect for too many centuries on his people.) For it is a fact that the principle of *Freistatt* was first met with in Europe in churches in Brabant, and the same principle was later well organised in the cities of Holland and Flanders, under Germanic law. Whilst Joan of Arc conceived the idea of France as a nation, the French Revolution enlarging upon this idea, saw Europe as one nation and for the first and last time in French history emphasised the European mission of France. But France produced in Napoléon an exponent of this idea who failed in the execution of its conception of the "European New Order". The Convention had fully understood the meaning of the new idea and symbolised the rights of mankind in a large European family by electing seven foreign members to the Assembly, among whom was the German revolutionary poet Friedrich Schiller, who intoned "*Seid umschlungen, Millionen*"—Be em-

braced, O millions! (Schiller's work, "vibrating with such humanity", as Georges Duhamel says in his book, *The White War*, and the Ninth Symphony of Beethoven prove that Goethe was not the only German inspired with an urge towards *Weltbürgerium*—world citizenship.) Yet as far as the right of sanctuary was concerned, the Convention for internal political reasons was less generous.

Napoléon alone, the "tyrant" and executor, in spite of himself, of the new idea, was compelled for similar but external political reasons to lay the modern foundations for the right of sanctuary by his historic letter of incomparable moral and intellectual beauty to the city of Hamburg requesting the city's refusal to extradite French citizens to Britain. This gesture, which, although inspired by anti-British political feelings, nevertheless created for the first time in modern history in diplomatic relations between two countries the notion of the "Right of Asylum", did not prevent his sending Mme de Staël into exile for internal political reasons.

The Révolution from the start unloosed counter-revolutionary forces in France, which always had the advantage and always emerged triumphant in a "White Terror", while branding as fearsome only the "Red Terror", in 1815, 1830, 1848, 1871 and in direct line 1940 at Vichy. Yet the world in general only remembered the revolutionary beginnings of these events, saw only one France and believed that France as a whole was essentially revolutionary. The fact that "the other France" always succeeded in destroying the revolutionary or even liberal forces at the end of each of these intestinal conflicts was overlooked, and the fact that always, even behind the *façade* of Liberalism, the reactionary forces continued to hold the reins of government until the only means of remaining in power meant ignoring appearances and at last lifting the mask, as in 1871 or 1940.

This is where the great difference lies between the history of France and that of Germany: The "good" Germany has never assumed political form but remained a mere hope, the "other Germany"; the "good" France has often assumed political form in the course of history and has thus taken on the character of the "true" France, consigning the "bad" France to the wicked part of the "other" France.

It so happened, therefore, that the dictator Napoléon's gesture, his plea for the rights of sanctuary, was regarded by the civilised world as expressive of humanitarian France and, by one of the

many strange paradoxes of history, endowed the country with the reputation of a land of sanctuary.

Yet had Jean Longuet, that noble idealist, viewed the adventures of his grandfather Karl Marx in a serious light, he could have quoted him as an example of the regrettable fact that after the "Liberalism" of Louis Philippe France had been in vain trying to become the promised land of sanctuary for political refugees, who, sooner or later, right down to our own times, were invariably and without exception driven out or betrayed by the inevitable rise of reactionary forces to power.

Heine and Boerne, who created this ever-persistent illusion among persecuted intellectuals, especially among the Germans, did enjoy sanctuary in the France of Louis Philippe and Napoléon III, because they pursued a policy frankly pro-French and openly anti-German. The heroes of the Polish uprisings were welcomed with enthusiasm because the Liberal *bourgeoisie* supported their cause (for it apparently implied the weakening of Russia) for economic reasons which eventually dragged France into the Crimean War.

Yet as soon as a real political refugee like Marx, a refugee for social, not national reasons, dared to attack the *bourgeoisie* as a class, as a one and indivisible whole, without giving a sop to the French *bourgeoisie* by confining his venom exclusively to the Prussians or the Metternichs, he was shamelessly driven out by the myrmidons of the "liberal" Louis Philippe. He went to Britain, where this "dangerous" revolutionary was allowed to work in peace and write his immortal work.

It is extraordinary to what extent a myth can persist, even in intellectual "Left" circles, and how difficult it is to have the true historical facts accepted.

Theoretically, it was certainly Napoléon who had given a foremost place to the right of asylum and established its modern conception, but the man to give it practical expression with the political backing of his country was an Englishman. Gladstone, in a historic letter, dignified yet firmly worded, forbade the Sultan to surrender the Hungarian national hero Kossuth to Francis Joseph after the defeat of 1848.

The great difference between France and Britain is that "Descartes' country" often changed her policy, yet always found practical, said to be *raisonnables* explanations for the change, while "Newton's country" would spend a long time considering how far the *raisonnable*, said to be practical, policy would affect the country's profoundly religious feelings and then make no change.

The fact that British chauvinistic elements, long before Hitler, twice destroyed the Karl Marx commemoration plaque could not harm, nor in any way affect, the happy life that Marx the refugee had led in London. The fact that the British Government lost its head a little for a short time in June 1940 did not, in principle, influence the attitude of Britain towards political refugees.

It would seem that the Russian revolutionaries knew their history well, for they always chose either Switzerland or Britain as their land of sanctuary, spending only a short time in France on their way. Strangely enough, Holland, the true land of sanctuary by tradition, having welcomed the Jews, the Huguenots, the Tudor and Stuart victims, and refused in a diplomatic note remarkable from both the juridical and humanitarian points of view to extradite the Kaiser, was left completely aside by modern revolutionaries.

Yet the myth which resulted in the maxim that "France is the 'second country' for the whole of humanity", welcoming persecuted people from the world over, is not without real basis. Indeed, France had always the good fortune to find outstandingly great and strong personalities to defend with prophetic foresight the rights of man and at the same time uphold the great reputation of France. It is clear from the cultural history of the country that Emile Zola, exile and at the same time symbol of humanitarian France, was not an exception but a typical example of this contradictory anomaly of the two Frances. Thus outstanding characters such as Victor Hugo, persecuted with hatred by their compatriots, spread in a typically French manner—this independence of spirit which leaves almost unwittingly an imprint on the world—the glory of their own country, so unfriendly to them, to the ends of the earth, even to the point of the glory of the victims becoming confused with the reputation of the nation itself (or rather some small part of the nation) hostile to them. Rabelais, the father of French prose and particularly representative of caustic Gallic wit, had to go many times into exile, and was only saved by a king as broad-minded as Francis I from the fate of a Dolet, who was burned, of a Ramus, killed in the St. Bartholomew massacre, of a fugitive Marot, who died in misery, and a host of others. Baudelaire, persecuted by the "liberal" *bourgeoisie* of Napoléon III, died in exile; Verlaine, Rimbaud and the like had to wander over Europe and Africa because of their compatriots' intolerance; Victor Hugo had to spend nineteen years in exile in Jersey, and Mme Curie-Sklodowska was almost forced upon French science by the will



of the American people, after her husband, a gentle, sympathetic figure, had died without even achieving his life's dream, a modern laboratory.

Yet these individuals did far more for the reputation of the country than all the Louis, Napoléons or Boulangers of the past or future. It is perhaps a mistake to oppose these genius exiles to the rest of the French people, since they represent just one side of the spirit and soul of France, as a Louis XI, the executor in the internal affairs of the country of this national spirit arising from the nebulous mysticism of a Joan of Arc, or an aggressive Louis XIV, the executor of this same spirit in foreign affairs, with its inherent tendency to stretch beyond national frontiers, burning Nancy and Heidelberg and conquering Alsace, represented another side of the spirit and soul of France; and it is precisely this variety in the intellectual and spiritual temperament of the people that makes the beauty of an ever-effervescent France.

In the same way the minds of a v. Kleist, a Hölderlin or a Mörike, with their wonderful poetry, are an emanation from one and the same Germany whose paramount thought has ever been Europe, before the realisation of this dream in modern history was attempted by means which people are pleased, in creating another "myth", to call "Prussian". It has been forgotten that the Austrian-Spaniard Charles V was the first to think in terms of world conquest, and that another Austrian took up this dream of madness at a time when economic and political conditions were such that it appeared as an almost logical conclusion. It has been forgotten, too, that Heine and Boerne levied their attacks chiefly against the Metternich system in Austria and Germany, and not solely against Prussia. Indeed, at that time, Prussia had not yet attained predominance among the German states left over in a state of political effervescence after the disintegration of the *Römisches Reich Deutscher Nation*. Prussia, before taking over from Austria the lead in reaction, was for a short period, after the defeat of 1806, almost Liberal, with vom Stein's reforms and the freedom of the peasants, with Rahel von Varnhagen's *salon*, with the opening of Berlin University in 1810, and with Alexander von Humboldt, that great humanist philosopher and philosemite.

The reactionary spirit in Germany was always represented by Hapsburg Austria, which produced a Metternich and a Spielberg, a fortress even more forbidding than the Schlüsselburg or the Bastille. This fact makes the national policy adopted by the small Danubian states more comprehensible; freed compara-

tively recently from the Austrian yoke, they chose, in 1938, to have the new imperialist-capitalist power of "Hitler *ante portas*" rather than the time-honoured spirit of the Hapsburgs, reactionary in spite of their touch of "Roman" culture.

It has equally been forgotten that it was the Bavarian princes of Zollern, from the Catholic city of Nuremberg well inside the Roman *limes*, who introduced militarism into the poor "Sandmark" of Brandenburg in 1415, and that three hundred years were to elapse before the little Dukedom of Prussia was united with Brandenburg. Then only, in 1701, was created the "Kingdom in Prussia", to become only after the first conquests of Frederick, "the Kingdom of Prussia". It is forgotten, too, that the great eighteenth-century intellectual forerunners of Germany, to be found in the various principalities forming the seats of German culture, the Lessing of *Nathan the Wise*, a Klopstock, a Jean Paul, a Goethe, and a Schiller did not have to go into exile. It is easily forgotten that the Jewish philosopher Mendelssohn and the Frenchman Voltaire could live under, and even with, Frederick II at a time when Württemberg was hanging its Jew Süß. Frederick has often been called Hitler's intellectual father, but the link between Frederick and Hitler is only real insofar as both, of Southern German origin, were strong personalities, yet in no way original; the one took the Italian Machiavelli as the spiritual founder for his state policy and the other his anti-Semitic ideas from the Austrian Lueger, Burgomaster of Vienna, the Frenchman Gobineau and the Englishman Houston Chamberlain, a fierce anti-Semite naturalised German in 1916 during the war. The fact that Heine, Boerne and the Democrats in 1848 had to seek refuge produced the myth that "a good German dies in exile". Yet if the number of Frenchmen of genius and talent who died in exile or had to seek refuge for a time outside their country is compared with that of the Germans, it will be found that this maxim could with equal accuracy be applied to the French, in fact to any country at periods of reaction.

The persecution of religious sects, such as the Huguenots, the Jansenites and others, took violent forms before and after the St. Bartholomew massacres. They went on after the "lull" imposed by Henry IV, culminating in the revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685 by Louis XIV, his grandson. It has always blackened the memory of the *grand siècle* that the Huguenots were thus forced into exile. These emigrants were then once more welcomed by England and the "Prussian" Great Elector of Brandenburg. The exile of a whole class, the "Coblentzards",

during the Revolution made the French people "exile-conscious". The mass expatriation of the Huguenots and the "nobles", the forced exile of so many famous French people, may well have produced in French intellectual circles a subconscious horror of the possibility of exile. Possibly, too, the pitiable wretchedness of the political refugees after 1930, who were known to the French intellectuals only a few years before as people of repute in their own countries, increased this fear of finding themselves one day in a similar position.

This may be the explanation why the advent of Bordeaux, Vichy and Laval brought no large-scale French political emigration in their train. One Popular Front Minister only, Pierre Cot, a Left Wing member of the Radical-Socialist Party and one of the most hated by the reactionaries, went into exile, and a few scientists, like Jean Perrin, who died in New York. No other well-known political figure chose then the road to exile, nor did any of the renowned military leaders; on the contrary, like Noguès, Dentz, Bergeret, Godfroy, Robert Blanc (who was condemned in June 1944 to twenty years' imprisonment for his anti-Allied activities in Algiers), or the Governors-General Boisson and Châtel, they remained actively hostile to the Allies, and not under "pressure" or from "necessity". Men in such positions could easily have brought over the Colonies, as others courageously did, or North Africa, to the Allies, or could at least have fled. The military leaders and politicians who remained in France could equally easily have left, for in 1943, after the tide had changed, General Georges managed to come out of France, when the German occupation was complete, straight to a seat on the Committee for National Liberation, and Vuillemin managed to save himself in a double sense. Some Socialists and Communists, who had fought with courage either actively or with their pens on the side of the Resistance, were only able with the greatest difficulty to leave France in 1942; a few Right Wing Deputies succeeded in reaching London or Algeria in 1943.

France was known as the country of "ex-Ministers", of whom there were hundreds, but not many left the country, even in 1944. In 1940, Pierre Cot was the only one to take the road to exile; one of the founders of the Popular Front Party, he had, wrongly and for narrow-minded political reasons, been made by many French people the scapegoat for the weakness of the Air Ministry. He belonged to the Left Wing of the Radical-Socialist Party and never betrayed the oath of July 14th, 1935, as the majority of the better-known members of the party did. From 1942 onwards others began to arrive—the Radical-Socialist

Mendès-France, later Commissioner for Finance in Algiers; Jules Moch, the intimate friend of Léon Blum, and Vincent Auriol, both Socialists; the Radical-Socialist Marc Rucart; Henri Queuille, candidate for the Presidency with Right Wing support opposing Lebrun in 1939—de Monzie mentions him in his book, *Les Ci-Devants*, in a somewhat “embarrassing” fashion, as one of those supporting his defeatist policy—and finally in 1944 Louis Marin, the only extreme Right French political figure to maintain an uncompromising nationalist attitude in Poincaré style towards the occupying Power, preferring to sacrifice the interests of his class rather than betray the ideals of his youth. It is self-evident that all those who experienced more or less difficulty in leaving in 1943 or even 1944 (for not all were as lucky as Diethelm, one-time collaborator with Mandel, who left France in peace-time style when one could travel first-class sleeper-wise, via Spain and Portugal with all the necessary visas and exit, transit and entry permits, to find himself on arrival in London immediately entrusted with a Commissioner’s office), could surely have done so as easily in 1940 or 1941. In part they were, however, fearful of exile and, in part, naturally enough, also preferred to remain for political reasons in general or to reorganise the former Left parties or to form groups in the Resistance movement. It would hardly be fair to say that when they did come their only object was to play a “part” in London or Algiers, but nevertheless the liberation of three French districts in North Africa flamed as a beacon for the coming liberation of the country and the beginning of a new era in the life of France as a nation, invariably apparent first in political form.

So, although all the ex-Ministers did not play a “part” in Algiers, London or New York, all attempted to do so either openly, publicly, through the Press, in the Consultative Assembly or . . . behind the scenes. The latter type belongs to the class of French politicians who never forget anything and are always ready to learn the newest tricks in all languages. But the delegates of the true active French Resistance were a reminder to them that the people of France had this time decided to accept one language only, that of sincerity.

The habit of continually changing Ministers did not cease with the Vichy totalitarian “stabilised” system. Four of them had already to go into exile—Chautemps, Tixier-Vignancourt, Flandin and Pucheu. Chautemps, more wily than the rest, felt safe only in America. But Flandin, a crafty back-stage politician of long date, had the impudence to continue his intrigues in Algeria. Tixier-Vignancourt, a young and ardent supporter of

the National Revolution, the spiritual son of Maurras and friend of Philippe Henriot, executed by the Resistance in June 1944, thought he could escape with the same success as Charles Vallin. This vice-president of the *Croix-de-Feu* and member of the "Consultative Assembly of Political Justice" in the Léon Blum trial, although declared "disqualified" by the Consultative Assembly, nevertheless was empowered to give lessons in courage and bravery over the Algiers wireless to the French at home. Even Pucheu, too, screened to a certain extent by a letter from Giraud, the Commander-in-Chief, had the barefaced audacity to go to North Africa. Flandin, Tixier-Vignancourt and Pucheu preferred the "comfort" of being under the watch of those who were daily proclaiming loudly that "traitors" should be punished, to the less lenient, less lawful, quieter though by far more effective and summary persecution of their ex-colleagues of the Vichy crew. This attitude, mixed with a certain ingenuous incredulity that the "populace" would dare attack and an absolute faith in political promises given (and it should not be forgotten that men like Boisson, Châtel, Noguès and others remained for long months in office and, when finally removed, remained undisturbed in North Africa until, warned that danger was imminent, they succeeded in fleeing to Spain to form a group of intriguers round Piétri, another "hope" in some reactionary circles), was clearly reflected in the cocksureness of Pucheu, who was convinced to the end that he was "safe". His execution and the conviction of other traitors who preferred to fight against the Allies, even after the November landing in 1942, rather than against the Nazis, have made it clear that the "comfort" was deceptive and that the sovereign power of the people is coming to the fore in the guise of Jacobin integrity and uncompromising firmness in their revolutionary faith.

The Left Wing political figures had learned nothing from the happenings in Europe and France, and still believed it possible to "go on" somehow, even after 1940; if they ever envisaged the possibility of proceedings being taken they sincerely and ingenuously believed that they would receive fair treatment. An ex-Deputy and ex-Minister for Finance, Mendès-France, almost apologised for having taken flight; he stated on his arrival in London that he had exhausted all the legal measures possible in his case and had finally realised that he could not hope for an impartial verdict. In view of the circumstances one stands amazed at that strange mentality which failed to realise the significance of the hard facts of the political conflict in process.

Yet a few really outstanding political figures, like the very worthy Marx Dormoy, frankly preferred persecution, the concentration camp and even death, to exile, probably because they were haunted by the entirely mistaken impression that they would later have to face the reproach of abandoning those who had placed their trust in them. There was nothing surprising in the fact that the Jews followed the example of the French, since they always adapt themselves to the customs of a country. Those like Léon Blum, Mandel, Blumel and Moch (Moch, after his internment and later release, came to London in 1943, going on active service in the Navy: Blumel could escape from the Evreux prison and came in August 1944 to London) took pride in standing up to the Republic's enemies, and the whole world was roused to admiration for the nobility of an unconquerable spirit and the dauntless courage of a Léon Blum during the Riom trial.

The Jews, for the most part, remained in France in spite of appalling persecution and organised deportation. The French, wearied by exile of old, and horrified by the wretched state of hundreds of thousands of refugees, preferred enemy occupation, that is to say exile at home.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

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### *WHITE RUSSIANS IN FRANCE*

POLITICAL refugees from a Europe in turmoil after the war had not the time to delve into the history of the right of asylum. They only remembered that France was their "second country", and that for a political refugee all roads in Europe had led for the last century to Paris.

Since Pilsudski had always considered Russia rather than Germany as the mortal enemy of his country (he informed Barthou in 1934 that were Russia included in a Locarno of the East, Poland would withdraw), Polish refugees only began to arrive in France after the first setback—he did not live to see the second—to his policy, which resulted in his imprisonment in 1916 in Magdeburg fortress.

The Czechoslovaks had at once, in 1914, placed their hopes on an Allied victory and formed a legion of their own in France.

The first real influx of political emigrants to France, however, began with the arrival of the White Tsarist Russians and social revolutionaries (Mencheviks). These two distinct types of Russian refugees both had a considerable influence on French policy at home. The White Russians were always staunchly supported by a large proportion of the French *bourgeoisie*, which was upset by the loss of many millions of francs and by nature anti-Bolshevik. The active attempts between 1917 and 1920 culminating in the despatch of Weygand to save Poland, in fact the whole of this interventionist period, are a proof of this. A stupid effort at diversion made by these same reactionary circles between Munich and the occupation of Prague, namely to make Hitler an "offer" of the Ukraine in long leaders in the popular papers, with numerous maps (in case the German General Staff should have need of them) went to prove the persistence of their sympathies, because the material reasons for their feelings had not changed during the twenty years between 1918 and 1938.

Kerensky's followers, the Constitutional Democrat Party, and the Mencheviks, just as actively anti-Bolshevik, exercised a great influence in other circles, among the Leftist groups and the ranks of the Socialist Party.

The various groups of Russian refugees were all well organised, quite exclusive and very active. Each "party" or "faction" or "faction" had its newspaper, in which it vituperated, needless to say, against the "Reds" and later against the other refugees. As early as 1908 Lenin bitterly complained in a famous letter of the hatred, envy, bad treatment, disparagement and, above all, the denunciation reigning among the refugees of that time, although all inspired by the same ideal. Political refugees, from whatever country they come, have retained these characteristics, which they seemingly bring with them as their only provision. It was in any event the case that these various groups of Russians, divided among themselves into sections of every possible hue, persecuted each other with such fierce hatred and blind fury that any attempts at reasonable argument or reconciliation were useless.

The White Russians introduced the "famous" method of denouncing their rival claimants for the secret funds in the various Ministries as "Bolshevik agents", although it was proved later that the OGPU had members within each of the groups. World attention was drawn to their activities at the time of the startling kidnapping of Generals Kutepov and Miller. Everyone eventually became so accustomed, and not only on the screen, to Russian "agents" that whenever a Russian appeared it was no longer a question of whether or not he were an agent, but for

whom he was working, for the Ogpu, the Sûreté, the Deuxième Bureau, the Intelligence Service, the Germans, or the Japanese. Russians coming direct from the realm of the Okhrana and the Cheka were certainly the most qualified for this type of work, above all in a country which was in so many ways similar to the one they had just left, especially as regards the excellent and renowned police organisation which, from the days of Fouché and the "anarchist" hunts at the end of the last century (once more the majority of anarchists, like Louise Michel and a number of others who had never thrown a single bomb, found refuge in London), had gone on increasing its pay-roll of snoopers and spies.

Even the White Russians did not escape the usual fate of political refugees in France. When their connivance with Hitler became only too obvious, even the Fascists round Bonnet could not prevent their expulsion at the same time as Abetz'. This action of Daladier's can be clearly seen now in its correct perspective as an ineffective attempt to put things right, though his efforts go to prove that he saw the danger into which his policy had led the country.

The Russian Socialist and Democratic refugees were swallowed up in the fate common to all foreigners of Leftist sympathies in France.

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## CHAPTER XIX

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### *THE "CARCASS" OF A REPUBLIC*

THE next country soon to send political emigrants to France was also a Slav country created by the Treaty of Versailles and freed at last from Austrian tutelage. Serbia loudly proclaimed that Croatia and Macedonia were linked to their Serbian brothers by close blood ties. This, however, did not prevent their Serbian masters from treating these minorities very badly, so that they soon developed into a strong and active opposition increased by the fact that Serbia was Slav Greek-Orthodox, while Croatia was Roman Catholic and had long been swayed by Austrian culture.

Croatian refugees in Paris placed their hopes naturally enough on Italy and for this reason alone were dangerous to France. Yet the Fascist Prefect of Police, Chiappe, tended rather to look upon this as a good reference. That is why these refugees were allowed to go about their work without interference up to



the time of the Marseilles assassination, which was entirely the work of Macedonian Comitadjis, with no connection whatever with the Croats. It is unfortunately the habit in France in such cases to hit first without thought for the far-reaching consequences, giving unchecked vent to public anger in accordance with the principle "hit first and ask afterwards". The fact, therefore, that the Croats had directly nothing to do with the murder of Alexander and Barthou did not prevent the police from hunting them like wild beasts, arresting them everywhere without any good reason and expelling them over-night. In less than a fortnight this small group of refugees had been completely and pitilessly liquidated. A little later statements were made in the foreign and even French Left papers giving these refugees' accounts of the incredible treatment they had received at the hands of the police, "bashing and battering" being only one of the amusements popular at the police-stations. Strangely enough, these reports, which were only too reminiscent of those made by political prisoners in Bulgarian, Rumanian, Polish and Yugoslav prisons, were ignored by the "League of the Rights of Man" and the Leftist International Lawyers' Association, which continued to send barristers and observers to the spectacular "Communist" trials held in the small Balkan countries.

These Left Wing circles failed to understand that a tendency does not spring up overnight, but develops slowly in a straggling manner, helped by propitious economic events or retarded by decisive counter-attack, only to blossom forth again shortly afterwards unless the root of the evil is removed.

It took Hitler ten years to get into power, having almost faded from public life in Germany between 1924 and 1929, because the requisite economic conditions were not then suitable to give active impulse to his movement. But every year insignificant outbursts *à la cravache* showed that he was still there waiting, like a mole, for the right hole to emerge from obscurity.

The Third Republic was thus a republic in name only, retaining only its carcass. It was slowly transformed from within economically and socially (by sudden advance and equally sudden retraction) and politically, into this Francisca-Fascist Etat Français. At first incidents like those after the Marseilles assassination, and later openly reactionary activities made the goal clear enough, so that the Vichy *coup d'état* when it came was scarcely more than a logical conclusion.

Naturally, at every stage of this development in Germany, France or Europe it would have been possible to put a brake on

this tendency, change into reverse and "save the world". The historical fact, however, is there to show that biologico-economic density alone was the final decisive factor. All other explanations, whether individual, idealist, romantic or "penny-dreadful", only help to stress the real reason for a state of affairs in which this world finds itself.

The most striking thing about the reproachful reports made by the Croats was their feeling of hatred and love for France and their undisguised hope of revenge one day. They had not at that time gone as far as adding "even if we have to ask Hitler's help", but they did—later.

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## CHAPTER XX

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### ITALIAN POLITICAL REFUGEES IN FRANCE

THE Italians as political refugees were fairly late in coming to France. It may be remembered that the brothers Roselli were still in Italy in 1930, and that one brother left first, while the other still kept his professorship in North Italy. They soon became the acknowledged leaders of the anti-Fascist movement and produced a paper *Giustizia e Libertà*. Their influence on French government circles was, naturally enough, not very great, but they were scarcely a nuisance, because their programme was more theoretical than active. When they attracted the attention and imagination of the French public for the first time—they were already dead. In fact, their assassination in 1937 at Bagnoles-de-l'Orne stirred and roused the workers of Paris almost to the point of revolt, the more especially as it was soon discovered that the killing was not the act of the Ovrá Fascista but of the French Cagoulauds of the Csar organisation.

The real Italian political refugees coming to France were always restricted in numbers and not very active. Their organisation, with the exception of the Communists, suffered considerably from the natural distrust felt for those arriving unannounced from a secret organisation in Italy or having miraculously "escaped" from the Lipari Islands. Other Italians, faithful followers of Mussolini and welcome at the Préfecture, did everything possible to undermine and counteract their activities. It did not take the Italian Machiavellian spirit long to discover that there was a mortal hatred between the Préfecture of Police

and the Sûreté Nationale in the Ministry of the Interior. They found that there was only one reliable method of counteracting the denunciation of their professed "comrades", to have men in their pay in both administrations and to play them off if necessary against each other. They overlooked the fact that it was far more often the Préfecture and Sûreté that had men in their pay in all the refugee groups. Besides, by these subtle methods the Sûreté was later able quickly to trace the route taken by the Rosellis' murderer, whose name was, ironically enough, "Juif".

At the beginning of the war a small number of Italians answered France's appeal to take up arms in defence of the country which had welcomed over a million of their compatriots. The vast majority, however, remained loyal to Mussolini. In these circumstances it is pleasant to note that very few of the real political refugees accepted the Fascist system's offer to free them from the concentration camps where Daladier's Republic had placed the few remaining faithful followers of Mazzini and Garibaldi. The majority of them, with a trained political sense, were careful not to confuse this hostile precaution taken by the ruling classes, whose enmity they regarded as almost natural, with the actively revolutionary spirit animating the French people as a whole, that is to say the "true France", which had so far always suffered defeat. They preferred uncompromising stoicism to a *raisonnable* betrayal. Many of them were sent to compulsory labour camps in North Africa, others were sent back to Italy where fate, kind for once, had a wonderful revenge in store for them. They were thrown into prison on arrival, but were freed by the Americans in Sicily, and were thus able to take their place in the front ranks of the new Italy.

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CHAPTER XXI

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## THE GREAT DEFEAT

As for the Spanish refugees, it was not a question of one emigration. Several waves of political emigrants came to find refuge in France. The underlying character of these groups differed, but they were always active and violent, faithfully reflecting the soul and character of their country, splendid even in its decadence and decay resulting from over a century of internal conflict.

They had all one characteristic in common, bitter hatred between the different factions of the same party, whether Catalans, Monarchists or Republicans, a faithful reflection of the domestic enmities they brought with them. The mortal feuds between the Anarchists, Communists, Socialists and Democrats, collectively called the *Frente Popular* during the Civil War, were reminiscent of the defenders of the Temple at Jerusalem, who formed themselves into three groups on the three different storeys of this veritable fortress to meet Titus' attack. Then they began to exterminate each other instead, thus giving the world an example of stupidity from which the British alone seem to have profited; for, appalled by the internal conflicts in the country during the Middle Ages, they have since then done everything possible to avoid civil war, bloody or not.

When the Catalan political refugees reached France the world was still in the period of illusionary security initiated by the Locarno treaty. This did not make the "liberal" Government formed from the "Left cartel" forget its "international duty" of upholding the Spanish Monarchist Government, as representative of "order" against the Catalan "anarchists". There was no need at that time to have recourse to the international conventions set up at Geneva to deal with "political crime", by real irony of fate at Laval's request, after the assassination of Alexander of Yugoslavia. The Spanish Government had then merely to invite the Government of "peace in Europe" somnolently to agree that the pacification of Europe should hold prior place above the sacrosanct ideal of the right of asylum. It was in this same spirit that Thiers had asked the European Governments to "surrender the Commune criminals to him", arguing that such people, driven by their political convictions to crime, lost the privilege attached to political opponents and could only be regarded as ordinary criminals.

Yet whenever the reactionaries committed terrible atrocities during periods of "White Terror" excuses were soon found and easily accepted by an order-worshipping *bourgeoisie*. Jules Simon thus found an excuse for the cruel treatment meted out after the fall of the Commune. Brogan<sup>1</sup> showed a clear understanding of this point when he wrote: "It was a pity, as Jules Simon was later to admit, that there were excesses, but 'men who see their blood shed, who have advanced over the bodies of their comrades, cannot be merciful!'"

By this same argument it was always possible to justify the

<sup>1</sup> *The Development of Modern France*, page 73.

violation of the right of asylum whenever it suited the Government in power. The same argument had been used by the Minister Ollivier against the nineteenth-century "anarchists" who had attacked the "liberal" order of Napoléon III.

It is strange to see how the *raison* of the governing classes in France had been able to find a thousand *raisons* to justify any and every attitude, and apparently basic principles have simply been thrown to the winds the very moment they had to be put to the test.

The influence of Christianity in the world has lessened for the same reasons, not only because it has not spared humanity the horrors of war, but because the ministers of the Church have always attempted to prove that the war in question was a holy war being waged for the Saviour. Illogically enough, the "national and Christian" circles in every country always rail against those who refuse logically and with courage, providing their attitude is genuinely sincere, to take up arms. They prefer to adopt this illogical outlook rather than admit the sad fact that the application to-day of the teachings of Christ in entirety would lead free men straight into Hitler's pagan slavery: eternal penitence without hope of redemption.

The Communists have always repudiated; though not on moral grounds, the use of "individual acts of terrorism" as a political arm, and on this point at least, of their basic theory, there has been little change, for the Russians, in accordance with the Lenin theory, only hailed the attempted assassination of Laval and Déat, the death of Heydrich and even the execution of Henriot (more dangerous as a venomously spiteful propagandist than several S.S. divisions), as "events immediately preceding the active uprising of the people against the oppressor". Meanwhile, the capitalists, whether Liberal or Conservative, and even the Socialists who all held in horror "individual acts of terrorism" against the "established order", were wildly applauding the courageous actions of a Colette or the executioners of the butcher Heydrich or Henriot without appreciating the illogic of their behaviour; for they were ready to condemn the assassination of Darlan, who had for years been not only a pre-eminent supporter, but an almost indispensable member of the Laval-Pétain-Vichy system. Yet these same individuals did not accord the same rights to the Catalan Macia or the Comitadjis, who felt just as much oppressed as the Czechoslovaks and whose villages were almost as savagely "punished". How easy it is for the governing classes in time of peace to rouse the general public against such "dreadful anarchists" and in time of war

to have them acclaimed as heroes, if their activities correspond to the aims pursued. But the masses in 1927 were not as docile as they later became under the effects of misery and retrogression; they were then still able to protest, hold demonstrations and threaten a general strike.

The international solidarity of the Governments was the stronger.

Macia was finally extradited by the Poincaré Government that had been called in by the reactionaries to save the franc and the country from the "misdeeds of the cartel", as ten years later, after the interlude of February 6, 1934, and "Papa" Doumergue, the franc and the country were to be saved from the Popular Front, and finally, when all these attempts had failed, the "nation" was to be saved by the "gift" of the person of Philippe Pétain to France.

The misfortune of this surprising country is that its great revolutionary masses have invariably been outwitted as easily as ingenuous children. They may be forgiven for having forgotten that the "system" had always been saved by defeat in war ever since the sources of real power had had to struggle hard, after the abolition of the old system, to maintain their position. The Bourbons surrendered Paris to the British, the Austrians, the Russians and even the Prussians (there is an odd tendency nowadays to erase the first three from this list and remember only the then least important of the powers in the Holy Alliance) and belied their ancestor Henry IV, the wisest of all the kings of France, when they convinced themselves that "The 'White Terror' is well worth Paris".

Thiers called in Bismarck's troops against the Commune to help stabilise the new capitalist system.

The "Left", failing at first to understand Marshal Bazaine's manœuvre at Metz, where he kept the army "intact" with the sole aim of curbing the same Left later, had at the start of the political upheaval in September asked for plenary powers for him, thus showing that the little people of France have always had an incomprehensible trust in their natural enemies, because at bottom they cannot imagine "such a betrayal" possible; but on realising their deception they react with savage fury and great courage, though with no plan of campaign, and finish with their backs against the *mur des fédérés* (where the *Communards* were shot).

The "Left" in 1940 did not attempt to protest by withdrawing their support from the Government when Reynaud, following Daladier, quite incomprehensibly took in his Ministry other

out-and-out reactionaries, including Pétain, and finally gave Weygand, a sworn enemy of the Republic (whom Léon Blum had with foresight removed from power), the post of Commander-in-Chief to "save the country".

It is not to be wondered at that the people, ignorant of the true facts, did not realise that Pétain had almost managed the same manœuvre in 1917 before being successful in 1940.

It is not to be wondered at that they never appreciated the attraction, in exceptional, almost masochist circumstances, aroused in every country by a uniform, which, strangely enough, is in no way lessened by the fact that it is worn by a defeated Marshal. On the contrary, this fact seems to increase the psychological phenomenon, as though the whole nation, defeated in their Marshal, were assembled round this venerable aged leader of theirs. Indeed with the example of MacMahon and Hindenburg in mind, the easiest way to be certain of election to the Presidency, in either France or Germany, would appear to be defeated on the battlefield.

But that the same masses should be outwitted twice in ten years . . . is not so easy to understand. And outwitted at that in spite of the striking example of the shameful position to which the "organised" masses of Germany were reduced and, after having brought about the failure of the 1934 attempt, outwitted again by the same manœuvre and the same tricks and dodges (though they had decided by November 30th, 1938 when it was already too late, to show their feelings in a General Strike, the failure of which producing, logically enough in the circumstances, a fatal resignation and deadly lethargy of *après tout, je m'en fous*); all this proves that the biological condition of the body of the nation had reached a degree approaching the crisis of a fever. This and this alone, in close relation with the material and economic conditions, can explain in 1940 the final success of the *coup*.

A few years before the Macia case, the German "coalition"<sup>1</sup> Government—Catholic Centre Party, Democrats and Socialists—had to face up to the same problem. The two assassins of the Spanish premier Dato sought refuge in Germany. The Germano-Spanish Treaty clearly protected them, since the extradition of political criminals was only to be effective in the event of the head of the State being assassinated. The Socialist Minister Radbruch had merely to refuse the request. But Werner, a

<sup>1</sup> "Little coalition" as distinct from the "great coalition", which included Stresemann's German Popular Party.

then high official in the Ministry of Justice, later to become the notoriously reactionary Reichs-Prosecutor at Leipzig (the same man who had arranged the acquittal of the murderers of Karl Liebknecht and Rosa Luxemburg, though this did not prevent the Socialist Minister nominating him to high office), "proved" beyond dispute that a Prime Minister would, in the meaning of the Treaty, be the equivalent of the Head of the State. The Socialist Minister acceded without stir. Wels, the leader of the Socialist Party and very powerful at the time, was violently opposed to the extradition and furious with "those jurists", but had not sufficient political sense to stop the extradition at all costs.

The German people protested, held demonstrations and threatened a General Strike.

To calm them some sort of compromise was arranged, which in the circumstances clearly meant their total defeat, but, needless to say, they did not grasp this fact and were delighted at attaining something. In effect, the extradition was only agreed, subject to the condition that the death penalty would not be pronounced. (But Goemboes' Hungarian Fascist Government had fully understood the symbolical significance of "international solidarity", and categorically refused to extradite Erzberger's assassins.)

Later still, in the full tide of peace, before the 1929 depression, well-intentioned people throughout Europe protested again, held demonstrations again, threatened a General Strike again, to save Sacco and Vanzetti. When American capitalism, by way of showing its unshakeable power, won the day, a few far-sighted intellectuals in Europe realised that these cases were the beginning of the international defeats awaiting the proletariat and the Left parties in general throughout the world.

The men of the Left have never known the way or never dared, when attacked by the Fascists, to protect their comrades, even though innocent, even though victims of their savagely pitiless political adversaries, not to speak of those of their comrades who made "blunders". In Germany they let the Court convict the Socialist Minister Zeigner, and in France they let the rag *Guinguette* condemn the Socialist Minister Salengro. Zeigner put up a courageous defence in spite of his friends' very wavering support, for to them his "case" was a nuisance. He was unjustly charged with corruption, the bribery largely consisting of a goose which had been given him for Christmas!

Salengro, in spite of the strong support of his comrades, felt that somehow there was a lack of fiery enthusiasm, of an identification with him to the "last", and of that fierce resolution



which alone determines action. Not every man, though innocent, can be a Dreyfus; in spite of every calumny and hardship he held firm to the end. He had clearly seen from the opening of the case against him that innocence alone was not sufficient, and that he would need that rare "nervous" physical strength to last out and obtain redress. Strength of that kind is unfortunately inborn and not acquired and is not always the corollary of the greatness of spirit of the wrongly persecuted *à la* Giordano Bruno.

Yet the Fascists, knowing that only positive action on behalf of a party ideology, in their case blood worship, is all that really counts in the eyes of the people, had always made a point of public solidarity in the event of legal proceedings against them, without worrying about any distinction between innocent, if they ever were, or guilty. To make this solidarity, even in death, more obvious still, they did not hesitate to call even assassins "brothers". As during his merciless fight against von Papen in the summer of 1932 Hitler's famous telegram expressing his solidarity with five Silesians who had murdered a Communist at Potempa made it openly and infamously clear to all with eyes to see that a period of terror was to come, so the withdrawal of the "Left", symbolised in the tragic end of Roger Salengro, was proof of the patent impotence of the Popular Front in France.

The masses might still raise their voice—they would no longer be heard! The dice had been thrown.

The great test, of absolute barbarity in Germany and refined weakness in France, was decided by the result of these two cases. The events to come only followed the course prepared for them, when a few years later there arose on the horizon of history the silhouettes of the temporary victors, Hitler and Pétain. The true measure of the forces in opposition had been taken at the time of the two test cases. The "Left" had clearly failed on both occasions.

The "Right", the reactionaries, the Fascists, alone understood it.

The Spanish refugees, who arrived in France after the failure of the anti-Monarchist uprising in which Franco's brother took part, and the Monarchists, who later fled from the Republic to be welcomed in the French Republic with all the consideration due to Spanish grandees, only formed small additional foreign groups of no great importance. The Monarchists, needless to say, exerted considerable influence in reactionary political and social circles. Though Juan March made preparations in Portugal

for Franco's onslaught he did not fail to place some of his henchmen in banking circles in Paris and Bordeaux. When these men of his were threatened with expulsion after the Préfecture and the Sûreté had both made unfavourable reports, mysterious influences intervened with the Government and were in most of the cases successful. The Franco-ites who by a lucky chance all happened to be in the Basque area in the summer of 1936, found the best hotels reserved for them and residence permits handed out by the southern district commissioners with an ease which would have delighted any real Spanish political refugee.

The Central European refugees, however, who went to Spain in a spirit of international solidarity to fight in the first round against Fascism, were hunted by the French police like wild beasts, as soon as they returned to France. There was nothing unusual in the wounded, even stretcher cases, being taken straight off the train at the frontier and confined in a special camp for "Reds". The fact that such things could happen with the Popular Front in power ceases to be surprising when it is remembered that this "Popular Front", influenced by the development of the international civil war in Spain, which made class distinction increasingly plain throughout the world, was quickly becoming openly reactionary. The really surprising thing, however, reminiscent of other events in other countries, is the name of the man in office. The Minister of the Interior was Albert Sarraut, a liberal and a well-meaning individual, but with no influence whatsoever in his own Ministry (the brother of Maurice, owner of the paper *La Dépêche de Toulouse*, and up to 1938 often known as "the uncrowned king of France", executed in 1943 by Darnand's men).

After the Catalan disaster in January 1939 (which gave Europe the first "lull" since the Abyssinian campaign—but only for some months) public opinion in France was still strong enough to force the Daladier Government to throw the frontiers open to the defeated "Red" Army. This initial "victory" for the people was soon on a par with previous similar "victories" which soon changed into overwhelming defeat. It was all too obvious later that the barriers were only removed for these hundreds of thousands of combatants, who had upheld the cause of the "true" France and the world, in order to confine them in camps.

A few thousands of them managed to escape to Mexico. They were Fascism's most sorely tried victims, since they were twice deceived. Indeed whole regiments volunteered straight from

these camps for the defence of France, only to return to them after the defeat like " slaves who had served their purpose " and leave them again, to enlist once more, in Algeria, and later in the South of France, in the ranks of those fighting the ideas of Hitler and Franco. Some of the leaders succeeded in escaping the Catalan ex-President's fate of being handed over to Franco to be shot. Two of the better known leaders of the former Republic remained in Europe, or more exactly they found refuge in Britain, del Vayo, the ex-Minister for Foreign Affairs, who later emigrated from London to New York, and Araquistain, ex-Ambassador in Paris. These two, although they were brothers-in-law, nevertheless felt it incumbent upon them to maintain the good old " tradition " of the civil war—form separate factions and quarrel to excess.

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CHAPTER XXII

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*THE " REVOLUTION-CIVILISATION " PARTY*

MONTPELLIER, 18/10/1944

The Independent French Agency reports the discovery in the barracks of Montpellier of the dreadfully mutilated body of a young student from Tarbes, Raoul Bacany, less than nineteen years old. This intrepid liaison agent of The United Resistance Movements was arrested by the Darnand Militia. He was suspended by one hand, burned with hot irons, savagely beaten and finally shot.

BEFORE the Vichy system came into being it was very difficult to make the man in the street understand the essential basis of Fascism and Hitlerism, especially that these two systems of totalitarian government were not connected only with one country or one nation or one race possessed by a devil from birth.

The idea of Fascism was cradled in Italy. Its founder had ill digested the teachings of Sorel.

His ideas on the use of " violence " had long been given practical demonstration in the Balkans and by Horthy in Hungary and later by the " Socialist " Pilsudski in Poland. The brutal assassination of Matteotti horrified the world.

All these things were soon forgotten shortly after the advent of Hitler to power. At the beginning of the Nazi period the capitalist world insisted that the two *régimes*, one the expression of democratic capitalism and the other of extreme capitalism

in the form of totalitarianism, could well exist side by side. As a result the refugees' "atrocities" stories were received with insulting incredulity.

Yet as soon as it was "practical" to pursue an active policy against Hitler, especially after 1939, such a "régime of horror" could only exist in Germany, the eternal "enemy" of all mankind.

This theory, motivated by obvious interests, was given a severe, almost mortal, blow by the fact that a similar system, needless to say provisional (just as the Fascist Government was forced on the Italian people for a "provisional period" of twenty-one years), was introduced in Vichy. The mere names of Vernet, in the beautiful South of France, or Meridja in North Africa, are to-day as synonymous with modern savagery as Dachau. This is the more horrifying as the names of these camps are French. The instinctive acceptance of natural French kindness is revolted at the very thought. To have even to mention the names, the shameful names, of these camps, wrings the heart of all sincere friends of "true France".

For all men of goodwill, for the clear-sighted and impartial who do not excuse for chauvinistic reasons, one nation's criminal acts by imputing them solely to its leaders or "the little clique of traitors" while condemning these selfsame acts when perpetrated by another nation as collective crimes, the "francisca-Vichy" system was a proof that neither Hitlerism nor Fascism was a specific characteristic of any one people, but merely a governing class's admission of lack of strength and of inability to maintain control by ordinary legal means. The fact that the practical expression of such a state of affairs took apparently different forms in different countries was merely due to differences in customs, habits, traditions and above all to the degree of development of modern capitalism and its more or less dynamic propulsion. The adoption of "concentration camps" in France, the delivery of thousands of the International Brigade to Franco, Hitler and the Italian Fascists, the condemnation of so many thousands of refugees, who volunteered to fight for their "second country", to worse slavery than in ancient Rome, show that barbarity and cruelty are not the "privileges" of any one race, but the inevitable consequences of a foul system whenever it succeeds in degrading a people, always in some degree "guilty" as a collective entity, to such a low level.

The Belgian illustrated monthly *Marine*, published in London, printed two articles in March 1943, which seem particularly significant and symbolic. The first, *A la manière de Dachau en*

*Afrique du Nord*, mentions the indescribable condition of the "groups of civilian workers, foreign and Spanish" (even as listed by Vichy, the "Reds" were still specially branded as "Spaniards" and were mentioned separately from the other foreigners) consisting of recognised anti-Nazi Germans, Austrians, Czechoslovaks, Poles, Belgians, Jews and others, who volunteered for the Foreign Legion at the beginning of the war for the duration of hostilities. Daladier and Reynaud had promised these foreigners, "our allies"—who were ready to transform their war of phrases against Hitler into armed combat—complete freedom, naturalisation and the protection of France.

They found Dachau in North Africa.

In this "great totalitarian era" of ours the practical expression given to the worship of might imbuing these systems, barbarous relics from the Middle Ages, is, in the end, similar. The savage use of such tortures as *la pelote*, *le tombeau*, *la mandoline* as punishment in these African desert camps lacked nothing of the barbaric cruelty "administered" in Dachau, or—the Nazi concentration camp at Breendonck, in Belgium, which the other article, *Les Discours du Lieutenant Pohls*, mentions. *Marine* published these two articles in sequence; this simple method of arrangement expresses admirably the feeling of revulsion that every civilised human being must experience for the monsters to be found in every country who are a dishonour, without discrimination, to any nation tolerating their existence. It is true that the behaviour of these blackguards demonstrates the identical phenomenon—that it is always the dregs that rise to power and are guilty in the material sense; such scum must be exterminated everywhere after the war.

Yet for all that one should not overlook the great "guilt of the nation", of the people as representing a community, even though such "guilt" consists only of a purely passive attitude—for in the spiritual sense this is the most dangerous of all criminal attitudes.

The savagely brutal hounding of Jews and foreigners in France, as always a prelude to the hounding of the workers, lost none of its horror because some of the French bishops protested, as, it would seem, did Cardinal Faulhaber and Bishop von Galen, against Nazi "paganism", or a few policemen turned with tears in their eyes from their victims when they threw themselves with their children out of the window. If any refused, moved by pity or their own better feelings, to obey the inhuman orders given them, no mention is made of them. It is precisely cheap sentimentality of this kind which can never rise to the nobility of

sacrifice, that makes it possible for dictatorships to exist in all their beastliness. It is precisely this "criminal passivity" that a great genius has for ever branded. May all the butchers and underlings obeying their cursed masters' orders, wherever they may be, hear again the words written a hundred years ago by one of the immortals of our culture—Victor Hugo. He was French, but to him nationality in its restricted sense meant nothing, since he prophesied:

"I represent a party that does not yet exist, the Revolution-Civilisation Party. This party will mark the twentieth century. It will produce the United States of Europe and then the United States of the world."

May they hear the echoing voice:

"Let us add that the author of this crime, needless to say, is an evil-doer of the most depraved and lowest type. The time has come for all those who wear robes, a scarf of office or a uniform, for those who serve this man to know it; for those who believe themselves agents of a power to know of their deception—they are the companions of a pirate. Since December 2nd there have been no officials in France, only accomplices. The time has come for every man to take careful stock of what he has done and what he is doing. The policemen who arrested those whom the man from Strasbourg and Boulogne has labelled 'insurgents' arrested the guardians of the Constitution. The judge who tried those who fought in Paris or the provinces had those who upheld the law in the dock. The officer who guarded the 'convicts' in the hold confined the defenders of the Republic and the State. The general in Africa who imprisoned the exiles in Lambessa, prisoners, bowed down under the burning sun, trembling with fever, digging a furrow in the arid earth for their grave, this general incarcerated, tortured and murdered those who had struck a blow for right. Generals, officers, police, judges have all done wrong. They have not merely innocent men before them, but heroes! not merely victims, but martyrs!

"Let these facts be known and let no time be lost! Let the chains be broken, the bolts drawn, the prisons emptied, the jails opened, since courage is not yet abroad to seize a sword. Conscience, awake! Rise up, the time has come!

"If law, right, duty, reason, common sense, equity and justice are not sufficient, give thought to the future. If remorse is silent, let responsibility have tongue. And those landowners who shake a judge by the hand, and bankers who entertain a general, and peasants who welcome a policeman, and all those who do not shun the minister's abode or the commissioner's office as though it were a plague-spot and all those plain citizens, non-officials, who go to the balls and banquets of Louis Bonaparte and do not see that the black flag is flying over the Elysée, let all those understand that opprobrium of

this kind is contagious, that if they escape material complicity they cannot escape moral guilt. The crime of December 2nd bespatters them."

A man who managed to get away from Tunisia has grasped the full meaning of what has been happening to the world in our time. In the *Marseillaise* of June 1943, he wrote: "Then she (a woman of the Resistance) had to go through it all, electric current, whip and the rest. What makes it so much worse is that it was French people who were working for the Boche as informers, agents and torturers." Those like Pierre Bloch and Mendès-France who had a "taste" of Vichy prisons, or the courageous Felix Gouin, who had a "taste" of Miranda in Spain, have also understood that "that can happen everywhere". The people of Martinique have also understood that a system does not rise up by itself but develops in accordance with economic and social demands. The *Evening Standard* of July 17th, 1943, quoted the following words from a report by a man who had escaped: "As the spirit of Underground grew, the Gestapo-like attitude of the officials grew also. Within a few months the spirit of 'snooping' and 'double-crossing' pervaded . . . 95 per cent of the people were Gaullist but lacked leadership and arms."

Throughout history, therefore, the weapons used by reactionary movements have been in every way identical. Metternich's double monarchy, the Empire of Fouché or Napoléon-le-Petit or Himmler, or the "French State" of Pucheu-Laval, all made use of the same methods—the continuous increase of police terror, the sincere or sham fanaticism of a group of bravadoes or a Pretorian guard for the "leader", the regimentation of the people and their exaltation to a state of narrow petty nationalism; though every dictatorship considers itself "exclusive" and creates its own terminology, they are all closely akin.

Refugees from the spread of reaction after 1848, Russians, Austrians, Prussians and French, in short Europeans, all found themselves in London just as the same thing was to happen nearly a hundred years later.

Since any dictatorial system must of necessity have a bent for expansion leading inevitably to war, the Napoléons or Hitlers are only examples of one and the same idea, the worship of violence. Those who maintain that a Hitler could only arise as a national figure in Germany should read Demosthenes' denunciation of Philip or what Victor Hugo in his *Napoléon le Petit* has to say and compare his description with Hitler between 1933 and 1939:

"There will most certainly be an awakening! The people will certainly rouse from their torpor, which for a nation like France means shame, and when she does awaken, when she does open her eyes, when she does see and understand what she has before her and round her, France will recoil in shuddering horror from this monstrous crime which had dared espouse her in the dark and with which she had lain.

"Then the fatal hour will strike.

"The sceptics smile and say, 'Cherish no hopes. This government, you say, is the disgrace of France. That may be, but this disgrace is rising on the Exchange. Cherish no hopes! It is only for poets and dreamers to hope. Look around you. Justice, the Press, intelligence, thought, speech, wherever there was freedom, it is no more. Yesterday these still had breath, movement and life; to-day they are petrified. And people are content, are satisfied with this petrification, are profiting from it, are doing business through it, are living on it, just as usual. Society goes on and plenty of worthy people are delighted with this state of things. Why do you want to alter it all? Why do you want it to end? Make no mistake, it is solid and firm, such is the present and so will the future be."

And again:

"This man would tarnish the background of history, just as he sullies the foreground. Europe laughed on, looking at Haiti, then she saw this white Soulouque appear. There is now throughout Europe at the back of every mind, abroad as at home, a feeling of profound stupor and almost of personal affront, for the Continent of Europe, willingly or not, is one with France, and what abases France humiliates Europe.

"Before December 2nd the leaders of the 'Right' were content to say of Louis Bonaparte, 'He is an idiot.' They were mistaken. His brain was certainly troubled, it certainly had blank patches, but it could sometimes produce more or less consecutive thought; it is like a book with pages torn out, suddenly there is something missing. Louis Bonaparte has one fixed idea, but a fixed idea does not mean idiocy. He knows what he wants and he goes straight for it. Trampling on justice, trampling on the law, trampling on reason, trampling on honesty, trampling even on mankind—he still goes straight on."

Or again, the "liar" Hitler:

"Louis Bonaparte sometimes breaks this silence of his, but he does not speak, he lies. This man lies as other men breathe. Should he announce an honest intention, beware. Should he agree, be suspicious. Should he take an oath, tremble. Machiavelli created some little men, Louis Bonaparte is one of them. Propose an enormity horrifying the world, disown it with indignation, swear by all the gods, proclaim honesty, then when everyone is reassured and laughing at the absurdity of the proposal, carry it out. This



is how Louis Bonaparte behaves. It was so with the *coup d'état*, with the Proscription Decrees, with the robbery of the Princes of Orleans, and it will be so with the invasion of Belgium and Switzerland and with all the rest. Such is his method. Think what you like about it, he uses it, finds it effective. It is, after all, his affair, and it will be for him to settle the matter with history."

The famous phrase, now a truism, that "Germany has invaded France three times in one century" belongs to the same school of ideas and has clouded the minds of men, preventing light being thrown on the basic facts for this assertion.

From 1800 to 1813, as every British boy learns at school, it was "the Corsican" who "invaded" Europe.

In 1815 Paris was occupied by the British, Austrians and Russians, as well as Prussians—Blücher's famous Waterloo men of whom Wellington said, "Would it were nightfall or I could see the Prussians on the way." In 1870 it was Prussia that struck against France. That may be the case. It is possible to read history that way, but in that event the reader is fast becoming "more royalist than the king". It is of interest to note the Third Republic's official opinion about it. *Larousse*, the French encyclopædia, does not mince words: "Abroad Napoléon, hoping to win predominance in Europe (*sic*) took part in the Crimean War, fought with Britain in China without achieving any appreciable benefit, seized Cochinchina, freed Italy, intervened disastrously in Mexico and declared war without forethought on Prussia."

The notions generally taught and accepted by one nation about another vary according to economic and hence political requirements. It is therefore not surprising to find, as Brogan<sup>1</sup> ironically points out, that a Carlyle, an historian of the people who fought throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries on the side of Prussia against France and Austria and against Germany on the side of France for the first time in 1914, considered Germany "noble, patient, deep, pious and solid" and France "vapouring, vainglorious, gesticulating, quarrelsome, restless and over-sensitive".

Even in ultra-nationalist French circles history is beginning to be considered in a different light, especially the period between 1870 and 1900 with the figure of Bismarck and his behaviour towards France.

The Third Republic—one of those "temporary solutions which alone become permanent in France", an expedient of a some-

<sup>1</sup> *The Development of Modern France*, page 14.

what grotesque situation made difficult by three claimants, an illegitimate but provisionally accepted child created by a chance vote of one voice with a defeated Marshal, descendant of an Irish refugee, as godfather, or "Regent" rather in his own eyes—was only to last from one defeat to a second. If this Republic had seen the light of day at Sedan, by the grace of Bismarck, it received at Sedan the *coup de grâce* of Hitler. Its existence was never secure except during the period before the 1914 war, when France gave proof for the last time of vigour and will to live, before rising again—in the Resistance movement. The country is now beginning slowly to understand that she will have need of these same qualities, vigour and will to live, in order completely to renew her circulation in both the biological and figurative sense.

There can be no doubt whatever that at the beginning of its existence Bismarck had no intention of undermining this young Republic, whatever the reasons for his benevolence may have been. He refused to be influenced by the *Alldeutschen*, who were already coming into being, and preached a policy of moderation towards Austria and France. A man like de Kerillis, the least suspect of being pro-German, admits this without hesitation, and his practical acceptance of this fact destroyed a myth which had effectively prevented a clear perspective of the growth of the Kaiser period after the dismissal of Bismarck, coinciding with the unexpected development of modern German capitalism. In de Kerillis<sup>1</sup> words:

"However paradoxical it may seem, it was actually Bismarck who saved Austria-Hungary by first defeating her and then making her his ally. Bismarck was no Pan-Germanist. He never allowed himself to be carried away by dreams of world domination, and he was as good a European as it is possible for a German to be when he is superior in strength. In his hands the German thunder was a powerful weapon, but one which was carefully directed and controlled. In fact it was not the overwhelming catastrophe foreseen by Heinrich Heine. Bismarck did everything he could to restrain the greed of William I, who, though he had entered the Austro-Prussian war with trepidation, did not want to leave a single scrap of Austria in existence after his victory. The Emperor was determined to annex the Sudeten Germans, but Bismarck opposed this, even to the extent of handing in his resignation and contemplating suicide. He wrote to his King that he was anxious to avoid wounding Austria mortally, and leaving her any motive for revenge. . . .

"These are strange words for a German!"

Bismarck could have prevented France from acquiring a

<sup>1</sup> *On the Causes of War*, London 1938, page 183.

colonial empire. With a defeated France before him, he could have conquered it for himself. The monarchist reactionaries reproached Jules Ferry with "playing Bismarck's game", which meant making France unable to think in terms of "revenge" in Europe. To give a defeated enemy the means of obtaining supplies of raw materials in Africa and Asia seems an odd method. The Fachoda incident, however, clearly shows that Bismarck's intention was to make an ally of France, defeated but not humiliated, as he had succeeded in doing with Austria, in spite of William I's contrary intentions, against Britain, the future enemy of young German capitalism at a stage of dynamic growth. In any event, whatever his reasons may have been, the fact remains that he did not intervene, as William II did later, in Morocco, nor use provocative measures towards the Republic, whether his actions were inspired by prudence, wisdom or fear or simply because he wished to reserve the activity of the newly-created empire to Europe. He did not even protest that Ferry had upheld the right of France to "intervene" in Europe and had even pronounced words not easily forgiven to other "national" leaders.

Ferry had said: "In a world such as this a policy of isolation or non-intervention merely means the road to decadence. Nations in our time are only great by their activities. To shine without action, without taking part in world affairs, to regard any expansion towards Africa or the East as a trap or doubtful adventure, to live in such a way can for a great nation only mean abdication and descent in a far shorter time than might be thought from the front rank to the third or fourth or even perhaps last." And he continued: "If France wishes to remain a great country she must exert all the influence her status merits on the destiny of Europe. It is essential that she should give the widest possible field of expansion to her language, her customs, her flag, her armies and her genius."

People prepared to accept ideas of a similar kind are scarcely in a position to reproach exalted ultra-nationalists in other countries for expressing the same ideas in a similar way as justification for the unification of their nation. They should be in a position to understand how and why Hitler's followers, their brothers in ideology, reproached Bismarck for having chosen the solution "Little Germany", refused the annexation of the Sudeten, sought the friendship of France, and left the work of "unifying" Germany to the "Austrians", who from Lueger's time on were louder than the Prussians in their demands for "Greater Germany". One ultra-nationalism is as good as

another, or rather is as disastrous as another, and can only bring Europe suffering, whatever its source may be.

In this connection, too, de Kerillis shows that he has fully understood the "racial" and ideological source of the "Greater Germany" nationalist idea when he re-establishes historical facts and points out that all these German nationalist movements had their origin in Austria and verged towards Prussia. These movements came from the realm of "wish fulfilment" and dreams to take on practical and political form as soon as the dynamic strength of young German capitalism rejected Bismarck's "self-restriction" as a "political mistake", started openly battling for the "conquest of the world" and became the "cause", in the historical-materialistic sense, of the present state of the world, the twentieth century wars. The fact that the slightly more civilised violence of the Kaisertum was soon to give place to the unadorned violence of Hitlerism in the pursuit of the same aims, the conquest of the world, which meant world markets, only serves to set forth the problems in their original, clear, sharp outline.

Once these notions are clearly stated a feeling of revulsion should arise at the thought of suffering humanity and "this" Germany's twofold aggression in one generation against France, Europe and the world should be doubly execrated, branded and condemned before history.

Yet "this" Germany was in complicity of ideas with "the other France", about which de Kerillis mentions the lack of "patriotism", which is only to be found "under grubby shirts" as it was a hundred years ago and always will be throughout history. This revulsion at a force overflowing its national limits as a result of inherent characteristics should be the same in every country, whether it be a question of the early nationalist ideas of Louis XI, the more aggressive policy of Louis XIV, the destruction of the Alcazar in Toledo by Bonaparte's soldiers, the systematic brutality of the Kaiser's soldiers in Belgium and the north of France or that of Hitler's hordes throughout Europe.

That the reactionary leaning of vested interests and private ownership was often obliged to conceal its inherent tendency; that the reactionary power-behind-the-scenes passed the reins of government in Germany to the "Corporal", because the "General" could not organise total war, usurped all the symbols of the Valmy Republic in France, from the tricolour to the rousing *Marseillaise*; that it had to don a sheepskin everywhere to deceive the "sheep"; that it had to make superficial concessions everywhere to meet the people's deep-rooted desire for change in the

economic and moral basis of existence; that it had to promise "National" and even "European" Socialism while at the same time preaching a Crusade against Communism, only underlines the real economic and intellectual foundation for a tendency that, ideologically, "has no country".

Those who reproach the Germans with *Kadavergehorsam* (blind obedience) cannot proudly talk of a "national army" in France in the old capitalist sense and couple it, as a President of the Republic did in the nineteenth century, with a host of platitudes, "the old school of army discipline, the esteem for authority, the respect for duty, the spirit of devotion, honour, patriotism, the profession of arms so fitted to build men and citizens". Still less should they praise the "military discipline" when they realise that it failed in both France and Germany to produce what the world most lacked between the two wars, civic courage.

The German has need of discipline as a shield, the Frenchman accepts it through *raison*, the Englishman permits it to hide his shy sentimentality.

Yet the British alone, an essentially anti-militarist people, have retained one great virtue, civic courage, clearly evidenced by their politicians, whether staunchly Conservative or extreme "Left", as well as by the people themselves.

Civic courage, an outstanding characteristic of the Frenchman of the Emile Zola period, has so dwindled that even the people of the Resistance seemed at first to fear the gravest risks in the fiercest guerrilla fighting less than facing their "leader" in London to tell him a few home truths.

It is one thing to rouse a man's martial spirit in the defence of freedom in Valmy style, and another to succumb after a national defeat to an ultra-nationalist fever with a complex of redemption through suffering and a national saviour, or yet another to become intoxicated on warlike words of vengeance, since the latter alternative, wherever it takes place, whether in Germany in 1918 or in France in 1940 or 1945, must lead by devious paths—to reaction.

The Germans are admittedly a race of warriors and for that reason have been called "barbarians" and "Huns".

The French of Louis XIV and Napoléon were admittedly valiant warriors too. The Comte de Segur in his interesting eyewitness study *La Campagne de Russie* says: "At this martial spectacle the warrior blood I had inherited from my fathers surged in my veins. My vocation had just been decided. From that moment I was a soldier. My one dream was to fight and I

scorned any other career."

If, therefore, some of the Fighting French leaders exclaimed that "Tunisia has given magnificent proof that the sons of France have lost none of their warlike virtues, a source of admiration for so long throughout the world", the more far-sighted spirits of the Resistance movement reply with deep feeling that the "Boches" have always had this "pride of the Huns", whereas the French have always had their "pride of Gallic spirit", that the time has passed for wallowing in words such as "glory", "victory", "revenge" and other Napoléonic reminiscences, that France on the contrary has inherited from Greece and Rome the cultural mission that it will be for her to fulfil when peace returns to the world.

When a General in a message to the soldiers of the Liberation gave first place to saying "Honour to those who have fallen so that the French army may be reborn with its incomparable traditions" and only added afterwards "and that France may rise again", some fighting men of the Resistance were disquieted. When a Fighting French Minister spoke of "past and future greatness and glory" and opposed to it "a republic with its lethargic, corrupt and feeble system of pseudo-democratic parliamentarism", Republican circles were disturbed, pointing out that Minister Garreau's speech in Moscow calls to mind the Fascist Governments' pre-war utterances rather than the words of a true democrat.<sup>1</sup> It would seem that Giraud was wiser or those drafting his address at least more shrewd—"For three years our people have shown the world an example of a people devoted to a great humanitarian mission, which they have refused to abandon."

If it is once understood that recourse to force, whether to bring about the unification of a nation, as under Louis XI or Bismarck, or for predominant control in Europe or the world, as under Charles V, Napoléon or Hitler, is in principle to be condemned without distinction of class or group in the various countries following such a policy, the courage and heroism of the soldiers of freedom in France, Europe and the world can only be a cause for rejoicing in so far as their victory prepares the way for every nation's "great humanitarian mission"—to live as human beings in a community and not like beasts in the jungle, freed at the end of the road from all class or race distinctions.

Such an aim of international scope can only be achieved in practice by the fulfilment of one essential preliminary, to instil these ideas free of prejudice, hatred or narrow-minded national-

<sup>1</sup> *France*, 29/7/1943.

ism into the mind of every child in every country. Only a future generation which has learned a "true and de-nationalised" history of the world, every child in every country being taught word for word in the same way, will have no place for an ultra-nationalist ideology, which must inevitably poison the relations between the different branches of the tree: *Humanité*.

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CHAPTER XXIII

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*A GENEROUS, HISTORIC GESTURE OF FRANCE*

HITLER rose to power at a moment when the whole world thought he had "missed the bus". Léon Blum was not the only one to prophesy that "Hitler was finished" after his defeat in November 1932. The world was, therefore, taken by surprise when, after two months of relative and deceptive calm for the Jews ("naturally" after the Reichstag fire "the Communists had not received kid-glove treatment") the Nazis organised the public boycotting of Jewish shops on April 1st, 1933.

The first of the refugees then began to arrive *en masse*.

Belgium, Holland and France, deceived by Goebbels' propaganda, immediately threw their frontiers open to these "racial victims". The truth is that the first emigrants to leave Germany were not Jewish refugees at all, but almost entirely political exiles, Communists, Socialists, Democrats and Left-Wing intellectuals. A relatively small proportion of these political exiles were Jewish, but they left Germany immediately after the Reichstag fire, before the Jewish question had even been raised. (The Jews, for the most part, even after the Nuremberg racial laws of September 1935, were living in comparative safety in some parts of Germany. Some business men were even successful in carrying through a few "good deals", which made them forget their position as social pariahs, until the pogroms started in November 1938.) The German refugee movement later took on an air of Jewish emigration, because after 1934 German political refugees were no longer leaving the Reich in any large numbers. Those who had made up their minds to continue the struggle had either already fled or were in concentration camps or assassinated.

France, in a magnificent outburst of indignation, welcomed with true fraternity and sincere compassion the "first victims of

international Fascism". France had found again the *J'accuse* atmosphere and was the better placed to exclaim at such barbarism since she had held out in the Dreyfus case for the first time to the end in actual conflict for the rights of man against every reactionary manoeuvre and had emerged triumphant in the cause of the "true France".

In the summer of 1933 Herriot and Paul-Boncour were in power, two prototypes of the sincere French Radical-Democrat whom the "real country", as *Gringoire* labelled the reactionary forces in France, would only tolerate so long as they were not dangerous, but who would be thrown overboard when necessary. Such Frenchmen's first impulses were invariably so admirable that their lack of strength and will-power to protect those placing their hopes in them was overlooked.

The Government, inspired by this *élan* that rouses in all hearts gratitude to France (for, after all, this generous gesture was a genuine manifestation of the "true France"), gave the police commissioners of the frontier districts orders to consider as "political" every refugee coming before them and to authorise his entry into the country, even though not in possession of a regular passport or visa.

During the hot months of the summer of 1933 political refugees had no difficulty in Paris or the French provinces in obtaining their *récépissé* and their *carte d'identité* soon afterwards. They were only asked one question, the only one in any case that they could understand in French: "Are you a refugee?" It was difficult at that time to understand why some of the Communists *mit allen Wassern gewaschen*, as the Berliners say, or "knowing all the answers", coldly replied, "No." The reason became clear enough later. These Communists, whose dossiers were not branded in 1933 with the red mark of doom, "Refugee", were still able to go quietly about their business in 1939 without being worried by the police. They only became easy prey, caught, as if by magic, the moment they lost the confidence of Moscow; a further proof that the admirable French police were ready to fall into the first childish traps and could only employ their talents at "hunting the enemies of the State" provided they had the assistance of "informers" in the best Fouché style. The order to the commissioners of April 7th, 1933, which will always remain, in spite of what happened later, one of the greatest gestures made by France and the finest attempt towards solidarity with persecuted humanity in the annals of history, was annulled on October 1st, 1933. From that date no refugee could be officially considered as a "political case". Soon, too, the first



persecutions, though still mild in form, began. The Prime Minister was the same Daladier who was so grossly to betray the Popular Front four years later. He was the same then, proclaiming to all who wished to hear that "it would be easy to come to an agreement with Hitler if only the dreadful refugee journalists would stop stirring up public feeling", as later when he had neither the strength of character nor will-power to oppose the policy of his Minister for Foreign Affairs, Georges Bonnet, in favour of closer relations with the Nazis even at the sacrifice of the most sacred obligations, such as the observance of treaties or the right of asylum.

The unfortunates who had been happy to enter the country of salvation without a visa were no longer granted residence permits, "their entry into France not having been regularised". The April decree authorising such "irregular entries" was in the limbo of forgotten things. It was impossible to obtain a work card, and those, moreover, who dared to ask for one proved by this very request that they had insufficient means of existence and for this reason alone found their identity cards refused extension, which meant to all intents and purposes an order to leave the country. A distinction soon began to be apparent between "wealthy" refugees and "poor" refugees on the one side, the majority of these two categories being Jews, and "Red" refugees on the other. A number of refugees, both Jewish and political, were living under administratively irregular conditions; some of them hid themselves—like the early Christians—in the "catacombs" of modern Paris.

A fine example of generous understanding made in an attempt to regularise an almost untenable position was the promise given by the Blum Government to guarantee freedom to all those who, having no papers, should voluntarily present themselves at the Préfecture, was welcomed as a message of salvation.

The number of German refugees in France has for political reasons always been exaggerated. At the beginning the figure reached almost 50,000, but the majority only remained sufficient time to make the necessary preparations for going overseas. In any event, only about 7,000<sup>1</sup> responded to the Government appeal and laid claim in 1936 to the title "refugee coming from Germany", thus renouncing publicly all links with Germany. (It is well to remember that the number of Nazi Germans and refugee Germans together, arrested at the beginning of September 1939 in France, never exceeded 15,000, excluding women and children.)

<sup>1</sup> Of the 7,000, the majority was already in possession of regular Identity Cards.

Some Germans and some German Jews preferred to retain their old papers, although apparently valueless since the German Consulate in Paris had for some time refused to extend them. It was surprising that no steps were taken against these suspect elements who had no wish to give up their invalid papers, preferring to keep them instead of taking out the new French documents. It slowly came to light through "unofficial but well-informed sources" that reactionary circles within the Ministries considered these "refugees" not as suspect, but on the contrary as "sincere and earnest opponents of the Nazi régime, but with no 'Red' tendencies, and with whom it will be possible to negotiate later". It was surprising, too, to note that the Consultative Committee at the Ministry of the Interior dealt quickly with the dossiers belonging to wealthy non-political Jewish refugees; they experienced but little delay in receiving the papers which meant to them the very height of salvation. Yet the others, for whose benefit Léon Blum had passed his decree, only received a *récépissé* bearing the inscription, "Refugee coming from Germany." (The Vichy system is not proud. It considered the method introduced in a humanitarian spirit by the Popular Front Government good enough for use in hunting the "Reds". From September 1st, 1942, Russians had to have their identity cards stamped "Russian Refugee" to distinguish them from "citizens of the U.S.S.R.")

Soon they began to doubt the value of a document that had to be presented every month at the Préfecture for extension.

Some of them, made suspicious by experience, though following Moscow's orders in conformity with the new Popular Front tendency, had but little confidence in the promises of a government they had not very long before labelled "Social-Fascist". They chose for preference to fall back on the irregular "catacomb" existence. Their instinct saved them in the main from the most serious police trap into which the reactionary tendency managed to transform Léon Blum's eloquent and practical proposal.

Two years later, in fact, when "Aranjuez's brilliant days were over" and the persecution of foreigners had assumed wide proportions, the police were in a position to arrest these refugees "lawfully" at their own homes and receive the praise and thanks of *Je suis partout* and *Gringoire* for "the brilliant execution of security measures against international elements spreading disorder and trouble".

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CHAPTER XXIV

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THE "FIFTH COLUMN" OR THE "FIFTH STOREY"  
HORDES

SINCE Léon Blum's decree excluded all refugees arriving after August 5th, 1936, these were the first indirectly to feel the change. Their *récépissés* were no longer extended and they soon received a very polite letter "requesting them to leave France", while others learned that "the refusal for permission to reside in France was regretted". Very few at first realised that these fine phrases hid a brutal fact, a departure order in its mildest form (*refoulement*). At that stage things could still be "fixed". A "red notice" was already more dangerous; it stated brutally that the recipient was "to leave within one week" and mentioned the penalties which would be incurred in the event of infringement of the "order". On receipt of this departure order the recipient fell into the ranks of the hordes of outlaws and outcasts whom their best friends no longer had the right to harbour even for a night under pain of incurring serious penalties. Nevertheless, there still remained a slight hope of "managing somehow".

But as soon as the "white notice" was introduced, the notice of "expulsion", delivered generally by two policemen who accompanied the recipient to the Préfecture, where he had to give a written acknowledgment in accordance with the law of 1849, all hope came to an end. Some wealthy traders, denounced for having sold foodstuffs to the Spanish "Reds", were affected by this measure from one day to the next; they were no longer able to obtain a visa within the accepted two days, so that they could not go to another country but were condemned without mercy, and the minimum penalty was three years.

Some Spaniards and Italians had passed a number of years constantly in prison, for as soon as they were released after the first conviction for "infringement of the expulsion order" they were immediately brought before the judge again, who was compelled to convict them once more because they were unable to return to their own countries, where they would immediately have been arrested. The others, the tens of thousands of every nationality who were "lucky" enough to obtain a few days' extension, often managed to vegetate in Paris for years on end in this way.

They became the "fifth column" or "fifth storey" hordes.

They must not be confused with what later came to be known as the "Fifth Column" instead of the good old word "traitor". They were too hunted, starved and humiliated for that and had only one thought in their heads: whether they would still be able, the following day, to obtain an extension of their papers. The real Fifth Column had no need of identity cards: the majority of its members were French or, if foreigners, every door was open to them. They never met the original "fifth column", but the others, if they were lucky enough, saw it once a week.

The "removal" offices were, in fact, on the fifth floor of the Préfecture. The privilege enjoyed by the unfortunates queueing up below with their "summons" in hand did not exist here, for no numbered tickets were given guaranteeing a place in the queue. No attempt was made even to keep up an appearance of justice and equality. A clerk's discretionary powers or a secretary's overpowering sense of importance had full sway here. There were no regular queues, but hundreds arrived early every morning, for the doors shut at eight o'clock, and came up to the fifth storey. The first to arrive would be lucky enough to find a place in the waiting-room with its five columns supporting the ceiling; this really was lucky, because it generally meant they would be called first. The others huddled pell-mell in the long corridors, old people, haggard-eyed, pregnant women with small children clinging to their hands, their husbands already in prison "for infringement of the expulsion order", and there they waited.

All the same, they had just one advantage over the people below with their "summons", who trembled with anxiety until the evening for fear of having to join the "fifth storey" hordes. Those above had no reason left to tremble with fright. They had already reached the last stage of all. They knew that their case would come up between nine o'clock in the morning and eleven o'clock at night. They knew that there were only two possibilities open to them: either they would obtain a further extension or they would be brought before the judge the following day.

There would sometimes be a slight movement in this lethargic mass. A "gentleman" with firm step, or more often a charming "lady", elegantly attired, would go straight to the clerk's office, drop a parcel of *refoulements* on the desk, and the clerk would immediately give the requisite extension. The "gentleman" nearly always came from the Deuxième Bureau and the "lady" from the Sûreté; they were "saving their informers", but at the same time making their uncertain position abundantly clear to

them by obliging them to go to the "fifth" like the others. Some time later a dozen or so people would be called in the ordinary way, so that the others would not know whether their extension had been granted by "intervention" or was the result of employing an ordinary intermediary, since none dared, except the poorest, who had no choice, arrive then on the "fifth" without a "protector".

A few minutes later the crowd would fall back into the sullen and drab silence into which the sordid atmosphere had transformed their flickering hopes.

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CHAPTER XXV

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## THE "GREY EMINENCE"

POLITICAL refugees from other countries may well have learned the power of the Préfecture, the Sûreté and the Ministry "Cabinet", but it was left to German refugees to discover the power, the *Machtposition* in real control in France, which could always be of assistance, had never been known to fail and was feared by all, yet was to prove most grievously deceptive at the vital moment—the Deuxième Bureau.

The scientific mind of the German, trained to probe, quickly discovered that behind the whole French civil and military administration there existed this special institution before which the authority of Ministers and even of the President of the Republic was brought to a halt. The Geheimdienst in Germany was merely an offshoot of the Reichswehr. The Deuxième Bureau in France, in spite or possibly because of the Dreyfus case and the success achieved during the war, was the "real" power in control, nightmare of the XV *arrondissement concierge*, the Drancy worker or the XVII *arrondissement bourgeois*. The life of the whole nation seemed to be in the secret charge of the Deuxième Bureau and this fostered credence in the legends published by former secret agents' memoirs, which all helped to increase the aura of mystery surrounding its name.

There is nothing surprising in the German refugees discovering the Deuxième Bureau, the "Grey Eminence" of political life and nerve centre of the country's defence through its secret channels and widespread organisation, with a pervading influence on the whole French political system. The Deuxième Bureau

had reason to fear Goebbels' "fake refugees" and consequently subjected the specialists, technicians, intellectuals and political "leaders" coming from Germany to very close scrutiny. The Secret Service was soon enabled to send some of these people back to Germany, whence they returned with information of vital importance. Were they shrewd enough, they refused to take money, but asked for "a small service" in exchange. It was soon common knowledge among German refugees that such and such a person had been successful after a trip to "Switzerland" in "fixing" something, obtaining an extension without difficulty, the temporary withdrawal of an expulsion order or a visa for relations. These obscure individuals, of whom little was known, obtained considerable influence, and consequently *Macht-positionen*, which made the political refugees of repute blench with anger. The latter had at first taken little notice of "persons" who came to seek information from time to time. Yet as soon as the extraordinary position held by the "grey Eminence" was appreciated, the desire latent in every German to become a "somebody", be important, have influence and play the "cyclist" (as the Germans disparagingly describe a person who bows in subservience before a superior, while "trampling" on those beneath him), came increasingly to the fore. They were not long after that in cultivating the "persons".

When two Germans meet they form three *Vereine*, or societies. The refugees in Paris formed new *Vereine* every day; some were entirely non-political with loud protests to that effect; others were Jewish associations of an entirely different character; others again co-operative societies; and last, but not least, there were the political groups. All these societies and associations and groups were in bitter opposition. Their moral disintegration was in exact inverse ratio to the increasing ascendancy of Hitler's sphere of influence in Europe.

Their decline, however, would not have been so sudden nor the consequences of their disunion have so seriously affected their political inability to regroup in France and throughout Europe, nor their baseness have appeared so great, had they not forgotten Lenin's maxim that any political refugee in contact with the police, no matter what the pretext, whether for the good of the party or even at the orders of the party, is no longer a comrade but an instrument.

Some of the political refugees of doubtful character soon began to intersperse discussions about their political and personal aims, which were more often than not interdependent, with outright denunciations, and they rejoiced at announcing that their

political opponent had at last been expelled or sent into "preventative detention" within a specified area.

The Frenchmen in higher office exploited these "German quarrels" to the full to obtain information about the people concerned and barely troubled to hide the profound scorn they felt for these "saviours of Germany".

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CHAPTER XXVI

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## GERMAN POLITICAL EXILES

THE journalist Georg Bernhard, with a van Dongen pose in his wide-brimmed hat, a former Editor-in-Chief of the *Vossische Zeitung* and ex-President of the International Press Association, controlled the refugees' "intellectual" life. He was not unknown in Paris, where his *Kontinentalpolitik* supporting an alliance between France and Germany with or without Russia against Britain had made a considerable impression. But others, remembered the part he had played in the great spy scandal, in which he had implicated his friend and employer, Franz Ullstein, because of the latter's wife Rosi Graefenberg, later Countess Waldeck. In 1933 he began publishing an anti-Hitler paper, the *Pariser Tageblatt*, but started another great scandal again when his friends; irresponsible individuals to whom he addressed ambiguous cables from America, seized the newspaper from its Russian owner, Poljakow, accusing him of being one of "Goebbels' agents".

German political and intellectual refugees had brought to Paris an atmosphere of the Romanisches Café and the Schwanecke, two famous Berlin haunts, where the fate of Germany would be decided—or such was the patrons' firm belief, blissfully ignoring the harsh realities around them. Two reviews, the *Tagebuch* and the *Weltbühne*, provided the spiritual nourishment for this group and another similar composed of "League of the Rights of Man" members and liberal Jews. The *Tagebuch* was edited by Leopold Schwarzschild, an unforgiving character, but an excellent journalist with a profound knowledge of world economic and political affairs, though "excellent" in this case must be understood to mean "in agreement with the imperialist idea of 'power politics' ". As he explains in his book *World in Trance*, Germany had practised this policy without having the right to

do so. In his view only America over which blows a fresh wind of young modern imperialism and, at a pinch—the British Empire of General Smuts—have his permission to follow such a course; at the same time he clearly evinced his loathing for the “Red Kremlin”, even more detestable in his opinion than the Nazi “Power” idea, which, and he seemingly wants this to be read between the lines, was only bad in so far as it came—from Hitler. No one is better qualified than H. G. Wells, the indefatigable champion of a “better world”, to show this book’s dangerously erroneous reconstruction of history between 1920 and 1940. Yet a book of the kind “suited” the reactionaries so well that Schwarzschild was immediately adopted as their darling, as were a number of other refugees whose contributions were by no means harmless, like Emil Ludwig, for example, the Duce’s former passionate admirer and historian.

Whenever a refugee was loyal to the ideals for which he had gone into exile and refused to play the reactionaries’ game, he was quickly declared destructive, denounced as an “anarchist” in the time of Karl Marx, treated as a “Socialist” during the reign of the anti-Socialist laws at the end of the nineteenth century, as a “Communist” in the period between the two wars and, following to-day’s fashion, as a “Trotskyite”.

The *Weltbühne* was founded by Jakobsohn, and after his death Paul von Ossietzky continued to edit it. He was a notorious pacifist, an intrepid and sincere opponent of German “imperialists” whatever form their imperialism took. He refused to leave Germany in 1933, was promptly arrested and remained some years in a concentration camp. When he was awarded the Nobel Prize as a token of intellectual solidarity, this fine gesture annoyed Hitler so much that he decreed that no German would henceforth be permitted to accept this honour; a German Nobel Prize was instituted instead. International opinion, nevertheless, in this deceptive pre-Munich period was still fairly strong. Ossietzky was released! He died a little later, however, worn out by the terrible treatment inflicted at Oranienburg.

¶ The other Germans only learned of the existence of these two reviews from attacks in the *Völkischer Beobachter* of von Ossietzky’s sentence to two years’ imprisonment for “treachery” for having revealed in 1932 the Reich’s secret rearmament.

After the German emigration had begun a certain Budzislawski continued the *New Weltbühne* in Prague, with a leaning towards Communism. The other tendency, represented by the leaders of the former Social-Democrat Party, including Wels



and Stampfer, and uncompromising in its attitude towards Communism, had also sought refuge in Prague. These "old" German Socialists managed in this way to escape the muttered calumnies inspired by hatred prevalent among the Paris refugees.

Schwarzschild, with his definitely anti-Communist bent and the "blessing" of the Quai d'Orsay, edited the *New Tagebuch* in Paris. It was an easy matter for the two reviews to continue their existence, since they had, so to say, merely "transferred" their subscribers, contributors and former resentment. Even before the 1936 scandal in connection with the *Pariser Tageblatt*, the feelings between the various groups in opposition had already reached staggering proportions, but now the sluice-gates were open. Alliances were concluded between the Russian Mencheviks, friends of Poljakow, with the moral support of Léon Blum, and Schwarzschild against his old enemy and rival Bernhard, who had the support of the barrister Torrès and Salomon Grumbach (one of Léon Blum's best and most loyal friends) to "exterminate" not Hitler but Bernhard, that "disgrace to all refugees". Georg Bernhard was in turn both betrayed and a traitor until the Russian and Polish Jews finally succeeded in "doing" this "German Jew", whom they seemed to loathe more than Hitler.

No Hollywood gangster film could give an appearance of reality to the ins and outs of this "man-hunt". Yet it is worth mentioning that the Russian refugees "succeeded", as they proudly proclaimed, in engaging as lawyer against Bernhard the well-known extremist Right Wing barrister, Maurice Garçon, who would "finish the Boche off".

When Bernhard, the biter bit, was ousted from the paper by his own accomplices, the manager, himself the object of attack, claimed that Bernhard had kept a large sum given him for the paper by a high official in the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, from the Ministry's secret funds. This accusation acted as a signal for the other claimants to the succession of the paper to attempt to obtain possession whatever the cost, since they regarded it as a position of super-influence with the refugees and the French authorities. They were all living in an atmosphere of seeming unreality, dreaming of a short war in which Hitler would be driven out by the French and Russian armies abroad and by a revolution at home, which would immediately precede or follow, and here opinion differed, the defeat. The person fortunate enough to be editor of the most important anti-Hitler paper in Paris, the representative to a certain extent of the German

political refugees, would have the best opportunity of becoming the first Chancellor of the Fourth Reich. These candidates had all only a weekly paper, a fact which in their opinion emphasised their inferior and unsatisfactory position in comparison with the one who eventually would get the daily.

Willi Münzenberg, a Communist Deputy, was sincere, hard-working and a genius in the art of organisation, the only one of the many German political refugees fully conscious of the magnitude of the task Fate had devolved upon them. He was the only one with character. He was a leader, the only one Goebbels had reason to fear and the only one that he did fear.

Münzenberg deserted in 1916. He enjoyed telling the story of a trip he made one day from Munich to Berlin in a compartment reserved for Deputies with Gürtner, Reichsminister for Justice, belonging to the Bavarian Catholic Party. Gürtner was Minister for Justice for Bavaria in 1924, and in that capacity freed Hitler after a few months' detention, but left the Socialists Fechenbach and Toller to rot in prison. These facts were apparently regarded as a strong recommendation in favour of this Catholic (a "sworn" opponent of Hitler in a somewhat odd form) for the post of Reichsminister for Justice. The Minister opened the conversation in a jovial tone, even though addressing the Communist Deputy opposite him, with the then customary question: "And where, my dear colleague, were you during the war, on the Eastern Front or in the West?" Münzenberg replied, with his natural nonchalance: "In Switzerland, Herr Minister, as a deserter." Gürtner, furious, rose to leave the compartment. Standing in the doorway he turned round and said in a tone now far from jovial: "Hitler, then, is right when he says that all the 'Socialists' were deserters."

Gürtner remained Reichsminister for Justice both before and after Hitler's advent to power, until his death in 1941.

Münzenberg, who had organised the publication in Germany of several Leftist papers, immediately started his activities again in 1933 in Prague and Paris, founded a publishing-house and a weekly paper and edited the famous *Livre Brun*, vainly denouncing Nazi cruelties, which at that time were looked upon as pure inventions. He organised the impressive mock trial in London of the Reichstag Fire case. He was the only German Communist who had had the courage to oppose the central committee and had won. With his wife and tireless helpmate, Babette Gross, he went to Moscow in 1936, refused to submit and was permitted to leave, because he had carefully prepared most embarrassing revelations

ready for publication in the event of his accidental death or any legal complications. His review *L'Avenir*, which appeared in several languages, was fast becoming a dangerous rival to Goebbels' magazine, *Signal*. He was particularly proud of two of the contributors to this review of his—Duff Cooper, one of the very few men in the world who showed civic courage, when he resigned from his Cabinet rank on the eve of Chamberlain's "triumphal" return from Munich and consequently meriting every free man's respect, and Henri de Kerillis, who saw things in all their stark reality, and was the only one to vote against Munich in the Chamber of Deputies.

Münzenberg was Grumbach's intimate friend, but never took advantage of his influence except in the case of the *Pariser Tageszeitung* (to conceal the "seizure" the name of the new paper had been modified) when even he became a prey to human weakness.

Rumour has it that after the defeat he attempted to take flight on his release from the camp; that he was accompanied by two young men, both with orders to kill him, the one at the demands of his former comrades, the other at Himmler's behest; that he outwitted them both by hanging himself; and, finally, that these two Judases long suspected each other of having "liquidated" their victim.

The fact remains that almost all the well-known German political refugees managed to escape and went to live in New York or elsewhere, spending their time, in the stupidest of Nazi styles, elaborating infallible systems for the "extermination" or "re-education" of the German race, while the only man who could have played an important part in a revolutionary, but not necessarily Communist, Germany—is dead.

The accusation that a high official had financed the anti-Hitler newspaper in Paris on the French Government's behalf was perfidious and a dangerous statement even had it been true. The author of this rumour intended it as a weapon against the French Government and his personal opponents to strengthen his tottering position. Everybody was well aware, needless to say, that the publication of this story would be exploited by Fascist papers in Germany and France, so that official relations between the two countries would be worsened and the cliques working hand-in-glove on both sides of the Rhine to jeopardise the Republic would be brought even closer together. But the conspirators plotting the seizure of the *Pariser Tageszeitung*, each secretly hoping he would be the one nominated by the Quai

d'Orsay, were not concerned with this political aspect of the question. They were only interested in playing off a high official at the Quai d'Orsay against the paper's manager so as to get him expelled, which alone could clear the way for them. And so the plotting therefore did not come to an end until Goebbels was in a position to broadcast a great triumph, that the manager and editor-in-chief of the anti-Hitler paper in Paris had both been expelled.

The young Tixier-Vignancourt, an extreme Right Deputy, ardent Fascist and vigorous supporter of Laval, both by his violent temperament and eloquence, who could not lunch happily before having daily gobbled up at the Chamber a few refugees—"the cause of all the upset in Europe"—knew the editor-in-chief. Inspired by feelings of loyalty, he intervened on his behalf. His intervention caused confusion and upheaval in the Ministry of the Interior, accustomed nevertheless to rottenness as it was. But they could not understand the high political reasons for this gesture, though they must in their view have been outstanding, for otherwise Tixier-Vignancourt "would not have compromised his whole political future". In such a case in France there is only one method of saving face, by arriving at a *de facto* compromise with both interested parties.

Consequently both men, although "expelled", continued to move about freely under the eyes of the police. They even managed to continue bringing out the paper and were not harassed by the Préfecture in the slightest.

Later, it is true, they were arrested.

But later the others were arrested too.

Soon all newspapers printed in German were forbidden in France by the Daladier Government.

Intrigue and crime had not paid.

Two prominent refugees took up an "Olympian" attitude apart from the common herd; they were Rudolf Breitscheid and Hermann Rauschning. From the moment Breitscheid had to renounce his life's ambition of becoming Stresemann's successor, he went about with an expression of injured innocence, which the Germans call "*gekraenkte Leberwurst*", and brought this mask with him when he came as a refugee. To make clear his refusal to accept responsibility for the political mistakes made by the Socialist leaders, he did not follow them to Prague, but enthroned himself in Paris, where he had a great influence behind the scenes, particularly as he was held in high esteem by Léon Blum. He was never noticeable during anti-Hitler

demonstrations, he never uttered violent diatribes: he always remained reserved like Brüning. (The illusory "hope" of many capitalists in America, Brüning remained a militarist at heart, Hindenburg's "little lieutenant"; indeed, he had always saluted him with clicking heels as "Herr General-Feldmarschall".)

When Breitscheid's son was arrested in Oslo, Breitscheid became the object of much sympathy; only very few learned that the son was soon released. When, in 1940, Hitler demanded the extradition of Breitscheid and Hilferding, which was shamefully granted by Vichy, free men the world over trembled for both their lives. They soon learned of Hilferding's fate. The "handsome" Breitscheid, as he was often called, the "Leftists' hope", was not "suicided" in the Nazi manner. After his own careful reserve, he was preserved by the Nazis for later; only a very few were to learn of his early release. As he was not an official of the Republic he could not, like Severing, have a pension; whether he worked in a factory like Loebe, the permanent Reichstag President, is not known. He is supposed to have spent his time bitterly reflecting on the injustice of an enemy's ostentatious favour being more painful than burning at the stake.

After the *coup* of July 20th, 1944, Hitler ostensibly discarded as too dangerous the idea of "using" any of his former opponents, and on the contrary began mercilessly to wipe them out. Consequently Breitscheid was again arrested and thus "rehabilitated" himself in his own eyes.

On August 28th, 1944, he was assassinated at the same time as Thaelmann, the Communist leader, imprisoned since 1933. Viciously the Nazis declared that both men had died in Buchenwald concentration camp following an R.A.F. raid, although it has been proved that no Allied plane flew that day over the region of the camp.

True Socialists, however much they regret that Breitscheid was one of the millions of victims of Nazi brutality, cannot forget that this "great" potential anti-Nazi leader was very weak and not in the least demonstrative in his public attitude towards Hitler.

Münzenberg always regretted having welcomed and introduced Rauschnig into the political refugees' circle. He believed that Rauschnig had forsworn not only the Führer but also National-Socialism. To clear himself of this absurd idea Rauschnig left not the slightest doubt about his admiration for the "pure" ideas of National-Socialism just as pure, primitive Christianity can be opposed to the dogmas of the various churches. It was possibly this "strength of character" which opened all doors for him in

France, Britain and America. It is more probable, however, that those in power in these countries saw in him another "pretender" in Brüning style, since they could at least be sure of this "bulwark against Communism". In the meantime he profited by this fashionable acceptance in a way that should for ever destroy the legend that only "Jewish" writers can commercialise a "success" reeking of morbid sensationalism. Even Starhemberg waited until he had left the Free French Forces and arrived safely in the Argentine, a country with Axis sympathies, before making public the admiration he still felt for his old friend Mussolini. Rauschning's book on his conversations with Hitler is one of the most brilliant publications of our time. Either what he says is true and a cruel revelation of a psychopathic genius's weird character, or it is pure invention and then, the imaginative writer showing such marvellous powers of observation, even more worthy of admiration. As a condemnation it is the best book on Hitler and the worst on . . . Rauschning. Had he only had sufficient "strength of mind" to show his notes to a few Allied ministers to warn them, and been wise enough to remain, without publicity, silent himself, he could have strengthened the impression that a man who had for years been a "loyal" Nazi had not quitted because his personal ambitions were thwarted, as was the case with Gregor Strasser, who was assassinated, and his brother Otto, the avenger of the "Black Front".

It was characteristic of the German intellectual and political exiles in Paris, their spiritual and principal centre as well as in other countries offering them refuge, that the known writers became unproductive, their writing lacked fire, while no young talented writers came to light. People in responsible office in America and Britain did not wish either in self-delusion or self-interest to admit the sad fact that this refugee movement had produced no strong figure as a worthy opponent of Hitler, who could, as it were, have represented and symbolised their hopes and prevented their deterioration, their fatal internal quarrels and moral decay; they simply remained devoid of inspiration, talent or ideas. Even the writers, whether Jewish or not, who had shone in Germany seemed to dwindle as though exhausted, or the lack of contact with their native soil had dried them up. They had never "represented" the German people as a whole, and were all read far more abroad than in their own country. But to create they had to feel themselves "the salt" and not "the scum of the earth". This is perhaps the reason that led Toller and Stefan Zweig to take the final step. (This is perhaps

the reason why the courageous André Malraux, whose experiences of all the horrors of war in Spain and France inspired him with a very human motto, "*que la victoire soit avec ceux qui ont fait la guerre sans l'aimer*", seemed to have lost all desire to leave, and published poems with favourable notices in the conservative *Le Temps*. His indomitable courage brought him back to action and he joined the "Maquis" in the centre of France.)

It is even more surprising that the talented writers who really represented the general outlook of the average German, whether Nazi or not, also seem to have lost their source of inspiration.

Ernst Jaeger, author of *Class 1901*, left Hitler-Germany and was a "refugee" for a short time; finally, in disappointment, sterility or repentance, he returned to Germany.

Hans Fallada, author of *Little Man, What Now?*, one of the most talented modern writers and a subtle social critic in his novels, did not "turn" Nazi, neither had he the moral courage to curse them publicly. He "died" morally in an "ivory tower", like many other modern writers all over the world, unable or unwilling to face the hard problems of our time.

Ernst Juenger seemed to favour totalitarian ideas before Hitler arrived. The materialisation of the "New Germany", as Himmler understood it, seemed to have "shocked" him. He is said to have published "double-edged" poetry in the style of Gide, against the *régime*; and his admirers indulge in the belief that they were very "courageous".

The same lack of aggressiveness, the same disappointment, sterility, hang-over, in the Artsibachef style of moral nihilism as after the unsuccessful 1905 Revolution, was beginning to be apparent in France—as though the Fascist system, itself incapable of any "productive creation", wanted to complete its work of destruction by paralysing both sets of refugees—those at home and those abroad.

The influence of Thomas Mann, a curious mixture of Swabian artist through his Creole mother and Lübeck provincial *Bürger* through his father, on Germans and German literature has always been over-estimated by a few, who promoted him to the rank of a "hope". They were some time in reaching the decision to honour him thus, possibly because they were not sure that the Germans had forgotten that this other "Olympian", if he had not gone over openly to Hitler like Gerhardt Hauptmann, the Republic's poet, nevertheless remained in Switzerland for some considerable time—in olympic silence. The "Anti-Fuehrer" then took no vigorous action by

speech or pen against Hitler. (The Prussian Fritz v. Unruh and the Saxon Count Ludwig Renn, did not hesitate for a moment in their choice of weapon.) Thomas Mann's publisher, Fischer's son-in-law, the Jew Bermann, continued to edit his works in Germany and managed to stay "sitting on the fence" as late as 1938.

Politically conscious refugees with long memories, or such as remained of them, did not forget that it was Thomas Mann, too, who published his *Reflections on a German Citizen* shortly after the revolutionary days of the young Weimar Republic. The National-Socialist theories found in this book a rich harvest of reactionary, philistine ideas suited to their ideology. (His brother Heinrich, who left Germany as soon as the Nazis came into power, took up a place in the forefront of Hitlerism's outright opponents.) Thomas Mann in his first broadcast address to "his people" washed his poet's hands in all innocence, because he had done his "duty" and done it to the full by "warning" the Germans at a public meeting in Berlin. His assertion that this fact still cleared his own conscience, could at best have been received with hilarity, if the "illusionists" refusing to acknowledge the fundamental changes in every people had not been using these intellectual wizards to prepare Europe for a new disaster, since they feared to see the required leaders arise from the real sources of the people fitted for the new tasks and not for a moment hesitant as to the side they should join.

It would seem that not only revolutions bring "new men" to the surface. Revolutions of the past and present make it clear that such men were invariably wiped out as "enemies of society" by their opponents coming into power later. In modern political emigrations they are merely "denounced" as "guests who betrayed hospitality" and expelled under sometimes tragi-comic circumstances or sent to prison, unless they are expert in the complicated technique of a "good build-up". So in Paris, unknown "comrades" managed a "revolutionary" rise, becoming leaders in this way of various sub-groups with the assistance of well-known French people whose ignorance of the political situation in Germany was complete, and they thus obtained considerable *Machtpositionen*—in a tea-cup. Yet were the source of their power carefully scrutinised, the "Grey Eminence" would always be found in the background.

Germany is perhaps the only country to produce the ridiculous figure of the "business man-cum-Socialist", a capitalist of a sort who thought after the so-called revolution of 1918 that he



could carry on more easily provided he played at Communism or Socialism.

The Deputies in Paris began their careers as Leftists and turned towards the Right as their business affairs prospered, and Stavisky had no need to adopt political airs to corrupt those around him.

In Berlin, however, it was not fashionable to turn Right Wing. A Barmat had need of a letter from Troelstra, the Dutch Socialist leader, introducing him to the German Socialists as an "absolutely reliable comrade".

A Parvus could publish a Socialist review, carry on dubious international dealings and yet still remain a "comrade", because he was shrewd enough not to be found out.

Many Germans of this kind escaped to Paris, Amsterdam and London, where they continued with their anti-Hitler or anti-German pose according to the requirements of the business in hand, feeling no embarrassment whatsoever at quickly changing their opinions with the change of country to suit the atmosphere prevalent there. Some were in no way embarrassed, but they nevertheless did not much like being reminded that they had long tried to find a Nazi protector and remain in Germany as a Jewish favourite in Jew Süß style.

"Professor" Simon—a purely honorary professorship of a small university dating from the revolutionary days—made the utmost of having for some days been Prussian Minister for Finance in 1919. The Jewish congregation in Paris even did him the great honour of co-opting him with Baron Rothschild for the internal administration of the Community in Paris. He succeeded in transferring his followers like the Leftist reviews. But his "glory" dimmed when an unlucky pepper speculation went awry.

The Socialist banker Aschberg, of Swedish nationality and an accepted intermediary for the Russians, which brought about his arrest during the Finnish war, preferred to remain in the shadows and merely donate his mansion to the "International Club" founded by Münzenberg.

Whilst among commercial refugees there were rarely complaints of any large-scale frauds, other lesser stars in the financial firmament were almost all connected sooner or later with unsavoury scandals, as though the political air had corrupted them all.

*Gringoire*, acting on Goebbels' orders, mentioned these facts in its column *Nos amis, les mètèques* in order to rouse the

French against these refugees, but did not even once succeed in bringing the most serious accusation of all, that of treachery, against them. During the hysterically mad days of May 1940, when fantastic stories about Fifth Column activities were at their height, it only went as far as spreading the rumour that large placards had been put up in Brussels inviting Jewish engineers or technicians to return to Germany, but even at that critical moment it did not dare invent a single case of treachery by a German political refugee.

The German political refugee movement died in France as it had vegetated, unworthy of existence and without the slightest appreciation of the greatness of the task which had fallen upon it.

Goebbels had no need to use corruption to compromise the movement.

*Gringoire* had no need to accuse it of treachery to make its existence "impossible".

The German political refugee movement was drowned in its own filth.

# BOOK II

## MOTORISED FATALISM

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### CHAPTER I

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#### *DECLINE IN THE FRENCH BIRTH-RATE FROM 1939 TO 1942*

"Will France have reason to regret the absorption, however small, of non-French elements? Of these foreigners with French nationality, against whom a feeling of stupid hostility has unfortunately often arisen, how many cannot to-day be numbered among the finest examples of our race? Was not this the case with Gambetta, Napoleon, Viviani, Mme Curie, Savorgnan de Brazza and many others, who have shown in startling fashion how admirable a crucible France is for making these new children into people of genius, symbols at the most critical moments in French history of all that is greatest and best in French inspiration?

"The naturalisation of foreigners immediately results in the absorption into the nation of foreigners living in the country. If the system of naturalisation is applied reasonably, it should prevent the growth within the country of compact groups of foreigners retaining their specific characteristics and liable to become 'national minorities' and hence a continual source of difficulties. Such a proceeding has proved desirable in every country having made appeal to foreigners, more especially when the appeal has been to foreign labour in certain specialised trades, which the French particularly tended to abandon. Should economic conditions make such an appeal to foreign labour necessary, then legislation must tend towards increasing the opportunities for naturalisation. Should a time of depression follow, legislation must tend towards measures of restriction. This fluctuation, closely connected with the economic conditions of the country, is clearly shown by the history of French legislation regarding naturalisation."—Charles Lambert, ex-Commissioner for Emigration and Naturalisation.

THE France of Napoléon I had about 30 million inhabitants. Germany, which the Hapsburgs had renounced to become plain Emperors of Austria, had approximately the same number or slightly less. The France of Napoléon III had about 37.4 million in 1861 and about 36.1 million in 1872. The population of Germany, whom Prussia had endowed with a new Emperor, was at that time approximately the same. The influx of millions of foreigners to France brought the population figure for 1911 up to 39.6 million, of which 45 per cent were townsfolk. Germany during the same period between 1872 and 1911 had almost doubled her population and reached a figure of 67 million, of which 60 per cent were townsfolk.

France had for two generations not only let young imperialist Germany take the lead with its rapid industrialisation and phenomenal growth of population unique in modern times, two factors which were to become one of the intrinsic causes of contemporary wars, but had shown herself incapable of preventing a further decline in the birth-rate. Only with the help of foreign elements was France able more or less to stabilise the population figure between 38 and 40 million, of which over three million were foreigners and ten million at least of foreign descent.

It was to be expected that events since 1939 would inevitably have a disastrous effect, making the figures in the demographic table paint a dismal picture. Statistics published in July 1943 for the year 1942 show 258,350 marriages, 14,332 divorces, 544,673 births, of which 16,001 were stillborn, 638,298 deaths, including 38,169 children under one year of age; there were 93,625 more deaths than births. The excess of deaths over births increased progressively—35,758 in 1939, 199,653 in 1940, and 166,995 in 1941. The position had improved in 1942 in comparison with 1940 and 1941, but nevertheless the excess of deaths over births still remained almost three times what it was in 1939.

The total population in 1942 was 38,000,000 compared with 40,060,000 in 1939.

The disparity between the figures is to a large extent accounted for by the disappearance of whole groups of foreigners. The persecution of foreign Jews, who had never numbered more than 150,000, did not affect this demographic table in any way. Large numbers of Italians and Spaniards, however, left France to return to their own countries or work in Germany. The Poles were handed over to Sauckel for compulsory labour in Germany, and exiles from the smaller countries, who totalled 300,000 in 1936, have almost all had to leave France.

It was the wealth of human material which enabled Bonaparte to wage a war of aggression throughout Europe and bring both glory and distress to France, while this same factor conditioned the Kaiser's adventurous attempts and Hitler's aggressive plans. Those who proclaim too loudly "Glory, Revenge, Victory" in Maurras style should think twice before wildly embarking on ultra-nationalist schemes, against which one voice in authority had been raised, that of Pierre Viénot, delegate of the French Committee for Liberation in London. They should think rather about the biological future of France which seems doomed if the above figures are taken as a basis for speculation—with a static birth-rate the population of France in 1985 would be 29·7 million,

of which 2.6 million would be under 15 years of age, 6.5 million between 15 and 34, 9.4 million between 35 and 54, and 11.2 million over 50 years of age. Old people, therefore, would form 38 per cent of the population as against 8.7 per cent children.

These figures speak a hard language. They prove beyond dispute that France, politically and economically, had need of foreigners. While treating the *mètèques*, those unprotected pariahs, more harshly than any previous government of the Republic, Vichy issued a statement in all seriousness, without appreciating the ironical contradiction, that the lack of foreign labour would prove a great handicap in the cultivation of the soil. On the other hand, foreigners compelled to leave their own country had need of France.

France and the foreign exiles should, therefore, have been complementary. But France, though indulging much in eloquence, never appreciated that she was fast becoming the immigration centre for Europe, the figures for France exceeding, proportionally, even those for the United States. France had taken on the air of a rather too comfort-loving aristocratic old lady, dreaming only of imaginary "security" and lulled in this pleasant dream, forgetful of all history's lessons on birth, the vital force and decline of peoples; too egocentric and thus on occasion egotistical, she tended to become over-loquacious parrotwise, although her nature is essentially opposed to such behaviour.

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## CHAPTER II

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### " *LES MÉTÈQUES* "

THE 1929 depression spread slowly and almost imperceptibly to France. The slump could not have the same shattering effect as in Germany on this rich, cultivated, mainly agricultural country. But as soon as industrial France realised she would no longer have need of the millions of foreigners she took unusually harsh action, though very typical of police administration since Fouché's time. The method was simple—to drive the very people who had helped rebuild the country from it. France no longer had need of Polish miners in the north, while Germany had to meet increasing labour requirements. It was not, however, a mere question of people making a sudden kaleidoscopic change of

place producing a new aspect and a different outlook. The hard, merciless law of capitalist economy was from 1937 onwards the sole cause of these centrifugal emigration movements.

Numberless trains were to be seen crammed every day with Polish miners expelled with their families overnight from their lovely villages and journeying towards the German frontier. Dreadful scenes took place every day before the trains left, because desperately enraged parents, with a hatred of France in their eyes, often refused to take their children with them since they had been born in France and were not for that reason subject to the same expulsion as their parents. Even pro-Hitler demonstrations were held at the time in Polish villages in the North of France to protest against the inhuman treatment meted out by the semi-Fascist Government.

Such trainloads of refugees or workers were in no way, therefore, a Vichy invention. Vichy merely had to increase the degree of cruelty by despatching these unfortunates to the German frontier in metal trucks without food. But the scenes before these ghost trains left scarcely changed, nor did the indifference of those not yet in such a plight.

Many of the Polish and Czechoslovakian miners piled into these trains in the years 1937, 1938 and 1939 did not continue their journey right to Poland, where there was no work for them, but settled in the Ruhr. There was plenty of work for them there and Goebbels' propaganda exploited their resentment. Many of them thus became the Republic's most embittered enemies and Hitler's most passionate devotees, for Hitler gave them bread and work as he had done previously to the German workers. They would probably not have been willing to admit, even had they been intelligent enough to guess the truth, that Hitler was only able to provide them and the German workers with work because he prepared for war. Their resentment was in fact so strong that even after the defeat of Poland many Polish miners who had been working in Belgian and Luxembourg mines chose to take refuge in Germany when the French armies advanced to Belgian territory on May 10th, 1940, a fact reported by a number of French papers at the time with indignant incomprehension.

The reactionaries had carefully prepared the ground with the Stavisky type of scandal. When the "Cagoulauds" for provocative reasons—and it is now known that the Deuxième Bureau was well aware of all these ex-generals' and serving colonels' activities—blew up in 1937 the offices of the Industrial Employers'

Association near the Place de l'Etoile, Chautemps, in his capacity as Vice-President, without even a suspicion of proof, immediately denounced these crimes as "perpetrated by foreign elements on the sacred soil of France". The people, already excited to fever point, had no choice when faced with such a positive declaration from an official source than to believe it. The Fascists had at last found the right stuff to throw to the disappointed and hungry crowds, the foreigner, this parasite, this profiteer, this "White Jew", the wretch requiring a residence permit, a creature lower than the dirtiest tramp provided he were French, forming in bulk a definite minority open to persecution as a collective unit, in short—"le mètèque".

The foreigner had never been really liked in France, while in Germany he was regarded as a strange being, and if from the West, a superior being. In the Germany of the Weimar Republic, society had a particular attachment for foreigners of distinction; there was an unbroken chain of great French writers from Gide to Duhamel who were entertained like royalty in Berlin. As a "refugee" in the German capital Guilbeaux did not have one single moment of material anxiety. Rabindranath Tagore's visit, though not a demonstration against Britain at the time, was nevertheless a real triumph.

France had so many foreigners of distinction that it could afford to ignore them. The *bourgeoisie*, the liberal professions especially, only saw in the foreigner a rival, harder working, more conscientious and careful by temperament, which meant by material necessity, who could make them feel to what depths their "don't care" attitude had dragged them.

The people did not like foreigners, nor did they loathe them, they were on the whole indifferent.

There is no foundation for the statement that the few thousand German Jewish refugees and the 7,000 or 8,000 Austrian Jewish refugees felt the average Frenchman's reserve or even antipathy more than the previous waves of emigration, the Russians, Spaniards and Italians or the 60,000 to 70,000 Armenians. That the public were more aware of the Italian or the Armenian in Paris, Lyons or Marseilles than of the German Jew in Paris would be nearer the truth. The more the social and economic conflict became evident and obvious even to the man in the street, especially the influence of the economic factor on the general course of political events, the more the people tended to make a clear distinction between Hitler and these refugees, in spite of the reactionaries' attempts to rouse the people against them.

The French workmen, magnanimous and fraternal by nature, especially the more advanced trade unionists, class-conscious and inspired with a Jaurès spirit of international solidarity, could appreciate the German workman's wretched position as a political refugee. French workmen knew that it was not the refugee's fault if he was forced to work for less than the fixed rates, but that the employer was at fault for requesting a 'three months' work permit only; for an employer would often go to great lengths to prevent an identity card being obtained, since this would be valid for three years and provide the owner with all sorts of advantages, including the right to normal wages. The French workmen knew that the capitalist employer was exploiting the "Boche" foreigner, generally a trained skilled worker who was entitled to three times the amount he was being paid. They could see how Karl Marx's theories about the "commodity, labour" were applied in practice, for if the "Boche" were to revolt he would soon find a special note added to his dossier.

French people as a whole were so accustomed for generations past to foreigners being in the country that they no longer had any strong feelings about them. Fascist circles therefore had to make long and careful preparation to divert the general public from the real problems at stake. They had to adopt crafty and indirect methods of rousing the people's regrettable tendency consciously or unconsciously to ape the faults of the governing classes. The people had to have hostility to the *métèques* instilled into them:

From 1937, the year of the great change-over and the beginning of the descent down the slope towards reaction, each government in turn thought it its sacred duty to open its first public statement after the constitution of a Ministry with a warning or threat against foreigners. Were these declarations to be re-read to-day, the impression would be gained that the question of foreigners in France was of far more burning interest than Hitler's expansionist aims. The sovereign people were thus informed, as King Ahasuerus was by Haman, that "there is a certain people scattered abroad . . . let it be written that they be destroyed", since only in this way could the country be cured. Each new government of the "Republic" announced further exceptional measures, increasing in their strangeness and inhumanity. The "Republic" in the last few months before its fall was distinguished only by the degree of exceptional measures passed, not by their spirit—from the "French State", which—and this should not be let slide into oblivion—retained in its first government many of Reynaud's Ministers.



Most professions were closed to foreigners by 1938, their rights being conveniently overlooked, and no embarrassment was felt at controlling the strictly private life of these people, who were fast becoming absolute pariahs. Eventually even marriage was forbidden them unless they were entitled to an identity card valid for three years, and these—the vicious circle once again—were rarely issued after 1938.

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CHAPTER III

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*THE FORFEITURE OF NATIONALITY AND—  
PARLIAMENT*

To make it quite clear that “political refugees” were all regarded as microbes likely to “contaminate” France, and as “unfortunate victims of a racial theory” no longer, great publicity was given to cases brought against naturalised individuals to deprive them of their nationality as a penalty for “Communist” activities. The means of legally depriving an individual of nationality acquired through naturalisation in France were provided by the law of August 10th, 1927, as well as the complicated proceedings to be followed as a protection against injustice. Attempts to interpret, as the law demands, “Communist activities” as “an act contrary to the security at home or abroad of the French State”—and it should be noted that Vichy did not even invent the title “French State”—were rejected in 1932. The Courts still held the term, since the real danger of Communism was remote, as “the literal expression of extremist doctrines”. Here again it was Hitler who seized upon a foreign idea, carried it to its extreme limits and then used on a grand scale a method up to that time only attempted in Poland, Yugoslavia and Rumania—the deprivation of nationality as a weapon against political opponents.

The curve of reaction in a country can easily be seen by a glance at the “exceptional” measures enforced against a minority. Such measures invariably signify a state of fever, instability and loss of balance, are designed to divert the public from burning problems and often prove the initial signs of collapse, unless an improvement in economic and political conditions follow. Anti-Jewish enactments are invariably followed by measures against the working classes, herded into trains with

the same cold brutality for "delivery" to Hitler as compulsory labour. Should the workers show resistance there was no difference in treatment apparent between them and the "Jews", both would be deported or merely executed on sight instead of in a slaughter-house or a gas chamber in Poland. At least half the population of France had recently been living in an "irregular fashion", in bitter resistance against the oppressor, whether in the guise of invader or *francisca-valet*. French people such as these began to understand that the political refugees who lived for years in France like pariahs, hunted by the police because their position was not "in order", were in no way outlaws but courageous people reduced by the hard law of necessity to defend themselves against the very enemy that the workers of the Resistance and all French people whose eyes have been opened have combated so staunchly. Yet only a few years ago the most stalwart in France and elsewhere would not have believed such a savage and embittered clash of the forces in opposition possible.

The Courts in 1938 changed their opinion with regard to what constituted "Communist activities", and declared the same acts which had been harmless in 1932 to be "highly dangerous". Wendell Willkie in America, who had a profound understanding of the things in jeopardy, has courageously defended naturalised Americans against the introduction of similar proceedings. In 1938 Parliament of the Democratic Republic was barely limping, especially after the "overthrow of alliances" in the Chamber, on the crutches of emergency decrees. Such a method of legislation is in essential contradiction to the system of democracy, as Britain has fully understood, only having recourse in cases of extreme necessity to "exceptional" measures. Democracy will be reduced to shameful oblivion if it cannot prove in the face of dictatorships and in its gravest hour that it can uphold its institutions. Democracy can win through provided that the "men" in power are fitted for the task and imbued with a sincere desire to save the Republic. The French Parliament had lost this essential virtue. Instead of raising itself to meet the tragedy ahead, it reduced Republican institutions to mere rags and tatters.

To prove the "grave danger" of these "naturalised Communists" to the public, the covering clauses of the law of 1927 were abolished and these "troublesome" elements could be deprived of nationality by a purely administrative act. There was nothing left even here, therefore, for Vichy to invent. The Parliament, which was only so in name, having abandoned the

real power to the Fascists or semi-Fascists, had well prepared the legislative way. Vichy had merely later to declare that the law in question would be henceforth applied not only to foreign Communists but to all foreigners without exception naturalised after 1920 and . . . to all Frenchmen in opposition.

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CHAPTER IV

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*THE DIABOLICAL CYCLE*

EVEN the most rational cannot be immune to such well-prepared attacks from people wishing to control and direct the people's fury in one particular direction. Xenophobia was soon "worn", but as yet it remained an ill-fitting garment. The French did not fall so quickly into line as the Germans had done. They felt by experience—"it cost them something to learn to distrust their generals", as General de Gaulle skilfully said when defending himself against the reproach of aspiring later to a dictatorship—and by instinct that a scapegoat was being prepared which, in the words of the old adage "half a loaf is better than no bread", in France was not the "Jew" but the *métèque*. They felt the hidden danger.

The people as a collective entity had no innate hatred for the whole German nation as such. They knew, however, that war would be inevitable the moment that hatred was adopted as a national costume. France had been bled so much that every individual secretly hoped another war would be avoided "at any price" in sheer self-preservation. The people were also sub-consciously aware, and had been for years, that "real" security could not be attained without a policy of "active defence" which, had it been purposeful and strong, would have turned, though only at great sacrifice and bloodshed, into "offensive activity". They were aware, too, that this "positive" spirit of security, which might mean war and death—the very things "false" security promised to avoid—could not be attained without hatred, the essential advance-guard of barbarous war.

Since the people did not want hatred but peace, nothing but peace, hoping to avoid war at any price and only prepared to accept war in a spirit of weary resignation, their cry of "security" was that of a tired and bloodless people too severely bled for humanity's sake between 1914 and 1918, a fact the short-

memoried world too easily forgets. Theirs was the cry of a people refusing to admit the crude facts of this vicious circle. Yet they preferred this cry, reaching the point almost of hysteria, to taking action, blinding themselves in a deceptive state of auto-illusion, the danger of which they only understood towards the end—when it was too late.

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## CHAPTER V

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### *THE GREAT CONFUSION*

THE leaders of the ruling classes directing the game were only too well aware of these age-old problems and the diversion generally introduced at first with fleeting success. They guessed that it should still be possible, if suitable means were found, to rouse enough strong feeling, resentment, antipathy, fury, envy and even hatred against a definite minority. From 1937, therefore, the diabolical cycle began, the Government seemingly followed the will of the people in accordance with Ford's precept of creating an artificial need and then using it for its own ends. The "*anti-métèque*" attitude became as strong after Munich as the cry "Peace at any price". This attitude had been introduced for a set purpose not without opposition, which, however, was weak; it was to a considerable extent linked with the Munich attitude and consequently not limited to any one party, to the Right or the Left. Munich devotees were everywhere to be met raving against the refugees as "the cause of all the trouble", while their powerless opponents realised only too clearly the complexity of the problems and the intentions of those "fishing in troubled waters". The aim of such people cannot be achieved if the water is clear, as La Palice would say, but in modern times the colour and composition of the water have a lot to do with it.

Thus with heartless cynicism the ultra-nationalist "patriots", beneficiaries from the maintenance of the capitalist system in its most retrogressive form, who "played the Ruhr" against a weak republican Germany, were now in 1938 preparing the general public by deliberately provoking general confusion before "re-considering the real interests of France". Then, as Laval formulated it clearly in June 1942, they would "renounce out-of-date ultra-nationalism", since it no longer coincided with their openly admitted self-interest.

The people were now given daily lessons on the only safe road to follow, withdrawal from Europe to the Empire, leaving the Germans their *Lebensraum* in the East, for the blood of no French soldier should be shed in opposition to such expansion. Flandin "logically" explained that the democratic powers could perfectly well exist side by side with the dictatorial states. An ex-Polish premier, without influence in his own country after the "Colonels' reign" began, but held in high esteem in France because of his opposition to Beck, implicitly approved this disastrous policy when he explained in *Paris Soir* that the entry of the Red Army on to Polish soil, even with the undisputed object of going to the help of Poland, would be absolutely "impossible" because "such an event would mean the end of European civilisation". That the devastating events to follow made this well-known personality change his opinion only tends to emphasise the degree of blindness that was prevalent even in such circles.

As late as December 1938 the salient idea was peace with a Ribbentrop in whose honour during his Paris visit mass arrests of political refugees took place—as in Florence during Hitler's visit to the Fascist State—without even the most courageous of Left deputies having the vigour or conviction to protest. This optimistic background with the secret hope of a diversion of bloodshed in the East, the ground morally prepared for political retreat, a prelude to military retreat, was in great contrast to the Communists' official attitude in the period between Munich and Warsaw, then to change to the opposite extreme of a "purely imperialist war", which was to become "a death struggle against Fascism" after June 1941.

The Socialist working classes in part followed Paul Faure, who told them that by making concessions to Germany it would perhaps be possible to achieve a limited Socialism, but that by making war nothing but death could result. These contradictory tendencies, these deliberate misrepresentations, this planned treachery, in short the whole state of general confusion, resulted in France accepting the war in a spirit of dubious fatalism which could only result in an equally dubious slogan—"il faut en finir". The truth is still concealed behind the atmospheric stimulant and the somewhat transcendental excitement produced by war, and will only appear in the crude light of day when the tonic of war is no longer administered. Then at the moment when the quacks refuse the final dose of morphia and provoke the great shock, everything will collapse in utter prostration, and an old man exploiting the mysticism of his name will rise

as an incarnation of the Divinity, and will preach "the great repentance" to an exhausted body.

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CHAPTER VI

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## THE "CAPRICIOUS LADY"

THE French by the beginning of the war could no longer feel surprise at any contradiction. It did not strike them as in any way odd to appeal to foreigners, the ideal prey yesterday for hatred and persecution, to give proof of their "patriotism" and join up as volunteers. How different the panorama had become! The public was shown propaganda photographs every day of foreigners forming thousands-long queues in front of recruiting offices. The people began to whisper that it would be "the foreigners who will save us", the Moroccans, the Foreign Legion, the regiments of foreigners forming the shock troops in the Waadt Forest.

The foreigners meanwhile continued to fill up forms in police stations, recruiting offices and concentration camps, whence it would be possible to "escape" to the Legion. Some of them were annoyed because "the honour of serving France" was carefully controlled and doled out. At first the only foreigners considered worthy of being accepted for the French Army were nationals of the frontier countries. "Special regiments" were created for the others, *régiments de marche*, and for the third category, the enemy refugees, there was only the Foreign Legion, which is not counted as a French regular army corps.

Refugees in Britain were admitted to the Pioneer Corps. This Corps, distinct from the purely British Pioneer Corps, was composed entirely of foreigners, often divided into companies according to the original nationality of the volunteers, but nevertheless formed an inherent part of the British Army, at least in the formal sense, although no arms were borne. Furthermore, the War Office transferred suitable elements to other purely British units, especially for technical functions, and refugees were promoted to officer rank.

In France at that time, although thousands of foreigners were called up, other hundreds of thousands waited vainly for their papers. They did not know that the military authorities did not want them, because they had men enough, but lacked material, instructors and officers.

During the hard winter of inactivity of 1939-40 morale slowly and perceptibly dropped, in spite of reviews held at the Front, entertainments given by French, British and American stars and the wine that Barthe obtained in the Chamber for the men. (Barthe's defeatism did not prevent Vichy arresting him as a scapegoat to conceal the fact that the occupying troops had drunk the good French wine; his friend Laval nevertheless succeeded in freeing him.) Daladier freed hundreds of thousands of farmer-soldiers to ensure that "the country should eat". There was nothing surprising, in fact it was quite logical, that these facts should coincide with a new wave of xenophobia. It was the time of Sumner Welles' visit to Europe, of peace proposals, abortive attempts to "stop the waste", in short the Fifth Column's concentrated efforts throughout the world. Then it began to be whispered that "those *mètiqes*" did not want to fight and were "ungrateful wretches".

But the Government was keeping a close watch! It could announce rigorous new measures against all "undesirable" foreigners who "do not want to fight for us". Police raids in Paris and all the big cities "quietened" the general public, that is to say the women and old men who remained alone in their homes because fathers, brothers, sons and husbands had been called up. During February and March 1940 foreigners dared not walk along the Paris streets, not even those with their papers absolutely in order; if they did, they were immediately approached by police agents, the notorious "blues", and brought to the Préfecture, where they would be badly treated, labelled "dangerous" and warned that "next time" they would have to produce their calling-up papers. There was only one safe method left to counter such unjust treatment and that was the Army, which did not want them. To get out of this vicious circle those constituting this "imaginary danger" again formed queues at the recruiting offices, but this time to demonstrate against not being called up.

Suddenly, after May 10th, 1940, not by magic but to meet the altered conditions, there was again a complete transformation of the panorama. The change was logical enough since conditions now demanded "complete national unity". Daladier made an eloquent speech and talked of "our Allies, the hundreds of thousands of foreigners". Conditions of entry into the French Army were immediately made easy for—"all foreigners". Furthermore, the law of May 18th, 1940, promised foreign volunteers as a reward the very thing they had spent years seek-

ing, which the moment when it became accessible could no longer be of any value and would moreover be immediately withdrawn by Vichy—automatic naturalisation.

Calling-up papers suddenly arrived in piles and there were daily more departures for the front. Once again, filled with enthusiasm like small children who quickly forget a wrong, these sorely tried people fell back on the old belief that France is a wonderful lady, a little bizarre in her ways, but to whom everything may be forgiven if she deign to smile. The lady smiled again on the admirers she had won back, for they had forgotten all their grievances, all the injustices, all their misfortunes; they only felt the relief, satisfaction and admiration now that they were "equals", and they had only one desire, to fight for the lady, their life-long illusion, the home of all humanity, their "second country", their—*Seconde Patrie*.

When betrayed, they woke up after the battle in concentration camps again, the "Capricious Lady", herself betrayed, was in chains.



## CONCLUSIVE EPILOGUE AND CONSTRUCTIVE CONCLUSIONS

President E. Herriot on July 9th, 1940, in Vichy:

"The nation, in its distress has grouped itself around Marshal Pétain, with the veneration which his name inspires in all. Let us take care not to upset the unity which, under his authority, is now established." (*L'Aurore*, 2/11/1944.)

President E. Herriot in September, 1942, replies to the question:

"But you have admittedly given full powers to Pétain?"  
"Let's get things straight. A majority of panic-stricken parliamentarians voted him certain powers. For the rest, he made a *coup d'état*. He has fooled everyone. He is a defeatist. A vile and cunning man. The day before I learned, through the papers, that I was no more Mayor of Lyons, he covered me with flowers. . . .

"Pétain is the Great Responsible. The others are but pawns. How can one still follow such a man. . . ?" (*Résistance*, 26/10/1944.)

President J. Jeanneney on July 9th, 1940, in Vichy:

"I present Marshal Pétain with our veneration and our complete indebtedness to him for this new gift of his person. He knows my feelings towards him—they are of long standing. We are aware of the nobility of his soul. It has brought us days of glory. May it carry us through these days of testing, and preserve us, if need be, from all discord." (*L'Aurore*, 2/11/1944.)

AN epilogue can be written to an historic period without basic conclusions being drawn. The facts themselves are denied propulsion force and are represented as being animated and directed solely by the will and intellect of man. Would-be objective historians are proud of this ideal or impartial conception of history, as though events were thrust upon mankind at the will of a few outstanding figures inspired by Hegel's *logos*.

Others delight in labelling Marx's historical-materialistic conception a "topsy-turvy hegelianism" just for the purpose of carrying "topsy-turvydom" to an extreme and having the intellectual right to seek the sole explanation of the course of events in the material foundation of history—to the complete exclusion of the influence of the human factor. Such an exaggeration, unconscious or not, often conceals the tendency of some of the Left to draw erroneous conclusion from a historical situation. Some even deliberately make it an excuse for their passive attitude at a given moment, alleging that the circumstances had

not been "ripe", while the real reason was their lack of courage to draw the right conclusions from facts and events, and their failure to act accordingly.

The fact that material things in dialectical form affect not only man's activities and reasoning, but that the individual also exerts a reciprocal influence on material things and is within these limits an essential factor in history, tends to be deliberately ignored.

Paul Levi, one of the few German Social-Democratic leaders clearly to foresee the likelihood of Hitler's ascendancy and be incensed at his party's "lesser evil" policy, gave simple but pungent expression to this idea: "It is not enough to let events take their own course, you need the men to 'flog' them."

Material facts, the masses and individual protagonists, all go to the making of history.

The masses and the individual, often ahead of events but sometimes symptomatically limping behind them, leaving a gap like a discrepancy between the two constituent elements requisite for any historical act, have often need of "flogging" into action, since the spirit, character, soul, and above all civic courage of every human being contribute towards the decision to be taken, the event to take place.

This principle alone has guided the presentation of facts and events. Therefore, these have not been submitted in a general form to logical examination, but the fatal historical decision has always, within reasonable limits, been linked with the faults, weakness and lack of integrity of the main "historical" character. Only by an effective linking in precise terms of the two essential factors, objective fact and individual, and not a vague general condemnation of the "system", can the stark reality of the tragedy of France be appreciated to the full.

The Third Republic, however regrettable the fact may be, had from the outset fostered a fear of great men, and for that reason always showed a preference for the "weezy" Lebrun type of strong characters. Thiers, the head of the "provisional government", was ousted as soon as the opposition felt their position strong enough. MacMahon preferred to resign his office rather than resign himself to a submissive rôle. Gambetta, symbol of the French "citizen's" courage and the real hero of the 1870 war (during which to the shame of the "generals" he gathered a "civilian" army together and succeeded in inflicting on Prince Charles-Frederick the sole defeat suffered by the Prussian Army), only managed to remain a few days in power in face of the "*imbéciles*" opposition. Clémenceau, Père-la-Victoire, was

defeated in 1920, to the shame of the country, and Paul Deschanel elected President, only to become a few months later, by the irony of fate, insane. Briand, the apostle of peace, was passed over in favour of Doumer. Once again the President's stay in the Elysée was short, for he was assassinated in 1932. When Daladier, disdainful of previous ominous portents, had the still tearful Lebrun "re-imposed", in 1939, the consequences of this woeful choice were more serious.

There is no denying that had Lebrun carried out his intention of continuing the struggle from Algeria or refused to "sign" Pétain's new "Constitution", history would have taken a different turn. Had the two elected leaders in the Senate and the Chamber been real "pillars" of the Republican system, which they have been declared to be by those—the Leftists in particular—who lacked the courage to face up to facts, the *coup d'état* might well have failed. If they had at least tried to accomplish their most rudimentary duty, namely to assemble the Chamber and Senate in the fateful week between the 10th and 17th June, 1940, events in France might well have taken another turn. But their famous letter of protest is pitiful to read with its unwittingly symptomatic phrases: "It is now an accomplished fact. We can but submit! Be it understood, nevertheless, that this *new* violation of our Republican institutions, *this time*, affecting those in *our* trust, makes it impossible for us, as good Republicans, to remain unprotestingly silent." (Italics not in the original text.)

The intrigues round the "sham bull" Edouard Daladier had no little to do with the Republic's descent into the abyss. Daladier's crime is all the greater since he was not one of the "*imbéciles*", entirely under the thumb of his friend the Comtesse de Crussol (a sardine canner's daughter, who married the Comte de Crussol without acquiring the attributes of aristocracy, and thus earned for herself the sorry title of "*la sardine qui se crut sole*"), who was, nevertheless, often used to stimulate the antagonism between him and Reynaud. Daladier saw the dangers, but "sham bull" that he was, did not spring upon those "grave diggers" of the Republic; far from that, he "betrayed" through fear and weakness, and joined these very people, who put his vacillating attitude to good use. He was only a "strong bull" in his opposition to the Leftists, who had raised him to power, and even then he only came out into the open when he had no risk to run, as for instance his removal of Jouhaux from the directorship of the Banque de France after the failure of the General Strike in November 1938. The sorry plight of Daladier as an "historical" figure is typified by his attitude at the time

of Munich, when, bowing low to Hitler, he held out his hand—when this was shown in French newsreels the cinema audiences maintained a dead silence. The story went the rounds among diplomats that when Daladier greeted each suggestion with the unchanging *d'accord* Hitler leant over towards his interpreter Schmidt and asked him to "Tell that man I find him very congenial".

Reynaud's case is almost incapable of explanation from the human or psychological point of view, for it was known that he was no traitor. Yet a traitor would have acted no differently; his eyes were open to the danger of forming his cabinet of such men as Pétain, Baudouin, and the rest, notorious defeatists who formed the mainstay on June 16th, 1940, of Pétain's first Cabinet in Bordeaux. Reynaud, however, was ready with an answer for all those who pointed out the risks. A Clémenceau would simply have ordered the defeatists' arrest, but a Mandel, as Minister for the Interior on May 18th, 1940, did not copy completely his former chief's great example, or it was already too late. There is no mystery in History, which above all never forgives the seeming evil of our century—lack of civic courage.

Léon Blum cannot easily atone for his unhappy policy by his admirable display of courage and magnificent eloquence during the Riom trial. History will judge this intellectual more severely than all the other leaders in power, for he had all the attributes of a great "reformer" at a time when economic conditions and the public were adequately "ripe" for action to be taken.

The masses, an unstable element, but so instinctively sure of the road from 1934 onwards that they needed no "flogging", were unfortunately light-heartedly thoughtless of material difficulties and lacked the energy to "flog" their leaders. The masses are at bottom innocent of blame. There was nothing they could do, once their impulse was exhausted, for they used the last opportunity they had in 1936 of expressing their will by the finest democratic method, the vote, to make their choice clear. Their outstanding success, the impatience of reined-in desires, their innate distrust perhaps of "over-formal" leaders and the only too justified fear of being "had" once again by "those reactionary gentry", these subjective elements corresponding to objective circumstances, created a revolutionary atmosphere. There was a fairly short period during which "everything seemed possible" because the reactionary "pillars", especially the Senate, gave in to everything, terrified by the memory of the Terror. The masses were persuaded in 1936 that the democratic "forms" would without dispute ensure the execution of the will of the majority.

True, in theory the "Popular Front", that inorganic social and political mixture, had nothing to fear. The "bloodless revolution" was on the way, nothing could prevent it. The "institutions" were already in existence as a guarantee of their will being carried out.

Perfect or not, the "institutions" were there; they were an efficient enough organ to give practical expression to the "people's vote". The men, the indispensable executives, the "leaders", they alone flung overboard all principles of straightforwardness, integrity, idealism and honesty, gave in at the first approach of "the two hundred", betrayed electors, party and country, and were traitors even to themselves when the Chamber was dissolved, disbanded as so many other "Chambers" had been under the kings, the First Republic or the Directoire. (On July 10th, 1940, only 80 voted against Pétain in Vichy, among whom were 34 Socialists; but H. Salengro, who had taken his brother Roger's place, voted for Pétain against his assassinated brother.) The various French constitutions had all foreseen the possible dangers and prevarications to be expected from the "elect" and all had special clauses inserted as a protective measure. The Constitution of 1875 had an article inserted in 1884 categorically forbidding any change in the republican form of government. But this type of "cardboard" protection invariably proved useless in face of a *fait accompli*, on the 18th Brumaire at St. Cloud, December 2nd at Paris, July 10th at Vichy, because the "protectors" themselves gave in. The institutions were, for the most part, good, but the men were invariably bad.

One first conclusion leaps to the mind from the facts presented: when France has risen again with renewed vigour, she will have less need of new institutions than of new men, or just men; France will have to face up fair and square to the "man" problem. An understanding of the importance of the man-factor with requisite civic training for the carrying out of any reconstruction plans was looming large among members of the Resistance and the Algiers delegates. It is a primary essential not to confuse the Third Republic's good or bad institutions with those who served it well or ill, as otherwise justified attacks on the one or the other may be exploited for personal ends or totalitarian aims.

Other conclusions are also clear to the minds of those who would apply the lessons of the past to use in the future—France will have need of a firm, intensified policy to increase the birth-rate to create the biological basis for a bold economic policy.

France will again have need of foreign labour for the work

of reconstruction.<sup>1</sup> A clearly defined policy combining fairness with appreciation of the difficulties of the problem could achieve an equitable solution for the mutual benefit of those bringing assistance to the new France, and of their new country.

Corruption is a sign of an outworn, badly paid administrative system, and of slipshod acceptance of responsibility. A strong administration, to the shame of the Democracies, seemed to have been a natural attribute, between the two wars, of the totalitarian system alone. France will have to prove her awareness of the former over-complacent attitude of regarding spineless officials as representative of the republican spirit and the new men, the men of the Resistance, in short, men, will have to show that their administration will have one sole aim—the welfare of the people.

The new France, too, will need to bring her whole legal system up to date. The privileged juridical functions—*les charges*—will need to be abolished and procedure simplified so that justice will be accessible even to the poorest.

There can be little doubt that France of to-morrow will not change the secular principle of separation of Church and State.

For such changes to the superstructure of the State administration to be carried through without harmful and dangerous clashes and upheavals, the basic infrastructure, the whole economic, social and political system will need to be reconstructed on new, firm, bold foundations suited to meet the wishes of the people as a whole. A people does not suddenly decide overnight to change its economic system by some revolutionary act. Every revolution is preceded by almost periodical upheavals, lengthy discussions on principles, and sometimes an initial defeat, as was the case in Russia in 1905.

It is scarcely possible to foretell in detail what economic system the new France will adopt—but the road she will follow can be divined by studying the circumstance of the rise of the Fourth Republic and the crises of its awakening.

Four distinct periods can clearly be traced corresponding to the four phases of the awakening.

<sup>1</sup> This need is now often expressed in the French press. *Libération* (26/12/1944) points out that 80% of the coal miners underground and 62% on the face in the North are foreigners; that in the mines of the East the foreign element varies between 70% and 90%; that 75% of all foreign workers are unskilled labourers as against only 25% of the French workers; that France's population in 1830 represented 18% and in 1930 only 9% of the European population; that France again needs foreign workers—and concludes by saying that a generous and just policy towards the foreign workers would constitute a great remedy to the threatening depopulation. *Figaro* (3/1/1945) urges the same remedy.

Each of them, taking place on the soil of Metropolitan France, was almost automatically reflected in the reflex actions of the Empire, outside the sphere of influence of the invader and Vichy.

### STUPEFACTION

PUBLIC opinion in France was not prepared for war, not even for the "phoney" war and still less for the avalanche attack, and was crushed, bewildered and stunned by the sudden defeat. To this state of mind prevalent among the majority of the people corresponded the mystic "gift" of the "person of Pétain to the nation". This faith in Pétain, the "defender of Verdun", of whose defeatist activities in 1917 the public knew nothing, would not have been sufficient to captivate the people, had they not been already bewildered by the speed of events, with five million refugees blocking the roads of France, and subconsciously willing for their "Père" to decide upon the course they should take regardless of consequences, providing it were one which would bring them peace, the "easy way out" of all their difficulties. If it is remembered that, even after the outbreak of hostilities, every nation took a considerable time fully to realise that "there is no easy way out", as H. G. Wells has it, it is easier to understand the effect this insidious propaganda had on a defeated people. Michel le Troquer, who left France in 1944, the son of André le Troquer, who defended Léon Blum during the Riom trial, mentioned in the *Alger Républicain* of May 15th, 1944, the grave danger of the "lasting effects of German and Vichy propaganda, especially the worship of Pétain" in spite of the fact that 95 per cent of the French people are now fully aware of all that the catastrophe meant and its cost to France. In *French Socialism, a Living Force*, Félix Gouin described this phase: "After the military disaster which befell us in June 1940 there was a considerable period during which all political life in France came to a standstill. Marshal Pétain's *coup d'état* on July 11th, 1940, definitely prolonged and intensified the collapse of public morale. The political parties without exception were all affected by it and lost for a time much of their influence and standing."

This stupefaction of a whole nation, a victim of "Pétain's mysticism", characterised the whole of 1940 and continued until far into the summer of 1941.

Symptomatic of the temporary paralysis of metropolitan

France was the negligible effect on the nation of General de Gaulle's gesture in London of June 18th, 1940. General de Gaulle, a little known figure, felt in 1940 that to fight for the honour of France was the outstanding object, regardless of any political end. A few of the French colonies joined him; but the failure of Dakar to come over, the fighting in Africa, Syria and Madagascar, seemed to prove that the troops were in the main loyal to Pétain, the majority on being given the choice preferring repatriation to France. While London "backed" General de Gaulle, America ignored his existence and continued diplomatic relations with Vichy.

### RESISTANCE

*"Un Français doit vivre pour elle  
Pour elle un Français doit mourir."  
—Chant de Départ.*

THE Resistance movement owed its origin to two sources, the one material, the other spiritual. The Nazis tried at first to behave "correctly" in France for propaganda purposes. "They are correct" became almost as dangerous a catchword as "we must finish it off".

Once again economic conditions were stronger than they. Plundering of the wealthy country began, as everywhere else in Europe, but in a more "civilised" fashion. Soon, however, systematic plunder became the order of the day, with the inevitable consequence of widespread destitution and want. The Germans' material needs increased from the start of the war against Russia and the effects were felt throughout France, but especially in the towns of the occupied zone. The winter of 1941-42 was a very hard one for the country and a visible sign of her progressive enslavement was Laval's return to power, which shook Pétain's prestige and put paid to many stories in circulation about "a double game". Gouin has made the material aspect clear: "Food rationing became increasingly severe, the cost of living went up by leaps and bounds; all this aroused intense discontent directed against the new Government and led to increasing friction with the occupying authorities . . . the result was that all over France, in both the occupied and unoccupied zones, there was widespread sporadic unrest which only needed canalising and organising."

It must not be imagined that morally a Resistance movement in an occupied country is born in a moment, at a word of



command. Such a movement must develop slowly or increase in strength as circumstances are unfavourable or propitious. First, there would be a handful of people loyal to their ideas—the Republic, democracy, country—their political bias of no importance, but wishful to contact each other, talk things over and discover the trend of public opinion in their own areas and elsewhere. Their efforts were greatly helped by the B.B.C. in London. Although only a few in France may have listened to General de Gaulle's speech on June 18th, 1940, since there was little reason at that time for anyone to tune in the British wireless, many now urged by temperament, instinct or patriotism, their ideals or hatred of the Vichy crowd and the Nazis, were roused to indignation, refused to accept defeat, ready to pass one day into open revolt—and they all turned towards London. Félix Gouin stressed the importance of this factor everywhere, in public or *en famille* surrounded by friends and helpers, after his arrival in England: "The decisive factor in producing this reaction, the reawakening of the spirit of France—and British public opinion should know this—was the B.B.C. broadcasts in French, which brought to France the amazing news that Britain had decided to carry on the war, alone, to final victory."

Oppressive treatment and dire want, with the final reawakening to reality as from a nightmare, brought the truth home to many *bourgeois*, who had been blinded by Pétain's prestige, although in the unoccupied zone his influence still continued to flourish; for in occupied territory the Vichy Government, the Nazis' lackey, was loathed even more than the occupiers themselves, whereas in the south the conquerors were held in the greater disfavour. A few intellectuals ventured to produce clandestine newspapers and slowly achieved success—*Libération*, *Combat* and *Franc-Tireur* made their appearance and acted as a directive for the individuals seeking to come together.

But the Resistance movement was, logically enough, in the main drawn from the elements suffering the most as a result of the defeat and the Vichy reign of terror—the working classes. Minor demonstrations on November 11th, 1940, and bigger demonstrations on July 14th, 1941, went to prove that a word from the "Underground" leaders had an almost magical power. This tranquil aspect of the Resistance movement, still moral rather than active in character, changed from the day the first German officer was killed in Paris. The Germans were compelled to take action. They did not as yet quite drop the mask. Campaigns were organised against the "Communists", who "are not French", in conformity with the recipe used for the

Reichstag fire in 1933. Many French *bourgeois*, who were still more afraid in 1941 of Stalin than Hitler, fell into the trap. And so the first hostages in Paris came to die, to the great indignation of the working classes and other enlightened, resistant elements, but without rousing to any great extent the *bourgeoisie*, which, with but a few exceptions, tended to be collaborationist. Pucheu, who kept the executioner well supplied, was its spokesman with the Vichy Government.

The real Resistance, however, in the full, symbolical meaning of the word, began on October 22nd, 1941, when twenty-seven hostages were killed at Châteaubriant. They died, the seventeen-year-old boy, Guy Moquet, and Timbault, the riveter, with an equal courage that will live for ever as a shining example of the true Resistance and the true France. They died, as Gabriel Péri, the Paris Deputy, wrote, in a magnificent letter before his execution on December 15th, 1941, "that France may live"; they died for "the youth of the world"; they died "to prepare *les lendemains qui chantent*".

The death of these heroes acted like a beacon for the beginning of a revolt. Determination to fight, hatred, and an unshakable resolve to "conquer or die" became predominant thenceforth in the acts of sabotage, which were fast increasing in scope and carried out with almost military precision.

Although the first leaders and the majority of the earlier victims of the Resistance movement came from among the ranks of the Communists, more and more members from other political groups and all social strata began to join. Soon these small groups, daily risking their lives to bring out an Underground newspaper or derail a train, developed a community of ideas beyond the immediate aim of chasing out the invader, and representing the main social and political aspects of the new France. Apart from those Resistance groups some political parties began the process of reorganisation. Félix Gouin, who led the thirty-four Socialists' votes against Vichy, was also one of the main organisers of the S.F.I.O., the French Section of the Workers' International, as the French Labour Party is called. The Communists had been "underground" from 1939 and were consequently already organised. Champetier de Ribes, a member of the Resistance from the very beginning, represented until his arrest, together with G. Bidault, former editor of *L'Aube*, the section of the Catholic "Democrat Popular Party" in opposition to Vichy. The Radical-Socialist Party had always neglected to form a strong organisation, counting for the most part upon the vote of the non-politically minded, and therefore handicapped by its former

policy, was scarcely able to indulge in reorganisation.

When Laval introduced the *relève* in 1942, promising a prisoner's return for every volunteer for work in Germany, the Resistance movement succeeded in convincing the workers of the true nature of this exchange, which was only a dodge, and making them see that only the aged and decrepit would be allowed to return, while the others would be kept in Germany under every possible pretext as "free workers". This "free recruitment" was an absolute failure. By the time this period came to an end with the occupation of the "unoccupied zone" on November 11th, 1942, the Resistance had taken on a wider social character and was materially and morally prepared to enter upon the third stage of its transformation.

Although the people were ready, a guiding spirit, an accepted leader was still lacking. Neither a Gambetta nor a French Lenin appeared. This failure to produce a leader corresponded to the material situation and the spiritual confusion reigning in this first phase of a reawakening, but still disrupted, France. Most of the first active members of the Resistance were Communists, but they were wise enough not to stress their political character, which would have been used as a justification at that time by those loud in their condemnation of the bogey Communism. Nor were the Socialists ever able to produce a leader and still less could the Right Wing party members who had individually joined the Resistance. The growing movement, beating with a great heart, was still without a head. Like Pirandello's characters in search of an author, the heroes of this movement were in search of a leader.

The developments in Metropolitan France were reflected in corresponding changes of character in the Free French movement outside the country. As Pétain in France had deliberately hedged the military problem in order the more easily to be able to resign himself to defeat, General de Gaulle did not manage at first to overcome the temptation to hedge the opposite problem, the political one. In the agreement of August 7th, 1940, signed by the Prime Minister, Winston Churchill, on behalf of the British Government, the French General had a clause inserted to the effect that the Free French forces should not be used to fight against French nationals. He had soon, however, to admit the civil-war character the struggle in France had taken on. He drew the conclusions and made his movement "political". The General became a politician before becoming a statesman. A National Committee, a miniature government, was created in

London. Yet the Allied military defeats after Dakar on the one hand, and the fact that not one of the "National Commissioners" was a well-known French figure, resulted in the Free French movement being virtually on the decline at a moment when the Resistance movement in France itself was on the decisive up-grade. The one lacked the masses, the other the leader.

Whatever may be said about General de Gaulle, who had often been depicted as a monarchist in Monk style and his intimate cronies as disguised "Cagoulards", one thing is certain—whatever his private feelings may be he has always kept a finger on the pulse of the people and has as much followed as guided them. When General de Gaulle became aware that the people of France were definitely behind the Republic and he could only win their support by adopting the republican spirit, he no longer hesitated, and his efforts to contact the Resistance movement were crowned with success. Resistance delegates, representing in the main the C.G.T. (the General Workers Union), the S.F.I.O. with Félix Gouin and the Communist Party with Fernand Grenier, came to London in the summer of 1942 and declared that General de Gaulle had been accepted in France as the "leader of all Free French".

The army in France without a general accepted as leader the general in London without an army.

This apparently bizarre union between the working classes in revolt in France and a general accused of monarchist feelings and suspected of Right tendencies can only appear surprising to those failing to understand from 1940 onwards the many apparent contradictions of the tortured soul of France. One battle-cry alone prevailed: "Unity in the struggle against the invader and Vichy, in the cause of the Fourth Republic." From the moment that de Gaulle, who had never given up the struggle, and with him France, could accept the second tag of the war-cry the choice was made. De Gaulle's Free French Movement, symbolically re-named in 1942 the "Fighting French Movement", to express the unity between the *combattants* outside the country and those in France, was soon in both the material and moral sense well prepared to enter the lists during the next phase of the national reawakening, and fight, after November 8th, 1942, against Vichy or some Vichy elements in North Africa.

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### THE MAQUIS AND CIVIL WAR

ONCE again it was an economic measure that brought about the

third phase of French liberation. The system of voluntary engagement for work in Germany was replaced by that of *désignation*, a certain number of workers from every factory being designated for work across the Rhine. Strikes were an effective counter-weapon, but the workers were invariably arrested and "deported" in the end. The only sure means of avoiding deportation was flight.

The liberation at the same period of a portion of the country, since Algeria is not a colony but consists of three *Départements* of France, added the moral support. Hearts became bolder, hopes of liberation in the near future rose and antagonism between collaborationists and members of the Resistance slowly took on the aspect of civil war. In the spring of 1943 when the Germans at last dropped the mask of "correctness" and the *désignation* system was replaced by "conscription", large numbers of the classes conscripted managed to avoid passing the medical examination and the younger men went into hiding in the Haute Savoie and Limousin districts, the Ardennes and the Cevennes. They took to the *maquis* and soon earned the name of *Maquisards*.

The name *maquis* seemed ill chosen, since it would evoke in France the memory of Corsican bandits, outlaws plundering the rich and protecting the poor, killing the police or embroiled in vendettas. The custom had come from Italy and was maintained in Corsica, a country of brush and scrub, the *maccia*, this name a lasting reminder that the little island was for many years under the rule of Genoa. The last *maquisard* in the old sense was arrested in 1934 and guillotined. The whole world Press described the courage, the almost fearless swagger, with which he died.

To placate the collaborationist *bourgeoisie*, evoke the Communist bogey and disparage the young members of the Resistance by depicting them in the light of criminals rather than political opponents, Vichy labelled them the *maquis*.

*Habent sua fata libelli* and words too weave their own destiny, though sometimes a curious one. Especially since Hitler introduced the methodical falsification of the value and meaning of words, systematically robbing them of their true meaning, and since the Communists, in America at least, have made known their decision (because "their aim was no more to overthrow the capitalist system but on the contrary to uphold private enterprise"), to disintegrate into "Browder-Powder", "counterfeiters" of ideas and words should be treated warily.

But words often have their own revenge and quickly assume their

true meaning without deceiving the world for long. The seemingly surprising paradox that active opposition to the war was a revolutionary act during the "First Germanic War", while similar active opposition to the war was a counter-revolutionary act during the "Second Germanic War", and not only from June 22nd, 1941, onwards, is a purely apparent contradiction. Similarly, between 1914 and 1918 it was the positive Socialist and international elements in the belligerent nations who were attempting to achieve a compromise peace, while the Governments rendered, in 1917, the attempts in the Stockholm Socialist Peace Conference futile; from September 1939 it was the reactionary semi-Fascist, ultra-nationalist elements, from the capitalist point of view international, who were desperately trying to arrive at a compromise, while the progressive parties among the Allied nations used every possible means to prevent the success of such dangerous endeavours.

By the same mental process the word *maquis* was struck afresh in the people's mind, since the right of coining ideas and words is, during this revolutionary period, in the hands of the people of France.

The word *maquis* soon became a title of honour, like the words *franc-tireur* and *partisan*, which formerly had a derogatory meaning. (The *maquis* embraced all parties and should not be confused with the two well-known Communist-Resistance organisations, the *Francs-Tireurs et Partisans* and the "Front National", concerned in the main with systematic sabotage.) Soon the *maquis* was organised on a real military footing, waging real battles against the "other France". This "other France" had by now come into the open, her fate definitely linked with that of the other Fascists throughout the world. She was soon as well organised as the reawakening "true France", the *maquis*, as though the physical law that the liquid in the U-tube will always rise to the same level, applied to the social life of a community in eruption. While the Anti-Bolshevik Legion was fighting in Russia the "home police" legion, soon to become Joseph Darnand's "Militia", was trying in vain to wipe out the "terrorists", the unknown heroes of Haute Savoie, who had the moral support of almost the entire population. It is now known that many thousands of foreigners, especially those of the International Brigade, and the "Red Spaniards" joined them in their common cause. In this struggle, which had become open civil war, it was the outlaws and *maquisards* who represented order, progress, social freedom, national liberation and law, while the "Militia", the henchmen of the Franciscan State and "New Order", stood

for retrogression, barbarism and anarchy. Feeling their cause to be helpless, the latter enhanced their cruelty, while the *maquisards*, breathing the free air of liberation, increased in boldness, in spite of the heavy losses suffered. By the spring of 1944 they were merely awaiting the command to change their guerrilla tactics into open war.

While the heroes of the Resistance in France were making history, their exploits soon to become legend and sung in folk-songs, the political situation in London and Algiers appeared to develop into a race between two generals towards one goal—power.

But this aspect was deceptive. The individual figures played their part, but outlined against the background of material events their movements threw heavier or less shadow according to their strength of character. They were representative of social forces in effervescence. The position of General de Gaulle, who was not advised of the landing, seemed weak, though this again was deceptive. Having command of an "invisible army", he represented for France and for the world the people in arms. Giraud seemed to have power, be in favour and have the ear of the Allies; yet his position had in reality no strong foundation. He represented the Vichy atmosphere and the aspirations of the *bourgeoisie* and anti-republicans of North Africa, elements condemned to disappear. He let a considerable time elapse before changing Vichy legislation.

De Gaulle, on the other hand, understood clearly enough what was expected of him and became more and more categorically Republican. By March, 1943, even Giraud had understood that he could not maintain his position without the support of the Republican people and hastened then to re-establish the laws of the Republic. From that moment it was curious to note that the two generals, one openly "Pétainist", a supporter of a modified Vichy system, and the other coldly reserved at the beginning of his political activities in his attitude towards the Republic and later coldly resigned to its re-establishment, began rivalling each other in their public assurances of Republican feelings in order to obtain the people's support. When the French Committee of National Liberation was created in the summer of 1943 with the two generals as presidents, the end of the race could easily be foreseen. By the end of the year Giraud had been eliminated and with him a number of the Vichyites, and after the Pucheu trial in 1944 he left the army.

The period of groping was over.

The Consultative Assembly under the presidency of Félix Gouin was not a "registration office". For the first time the voice of the people made itself heard; for delegates of the Resistance had come from France to make known the wishes of a nation ready to come out into the open and fight.

The leaders and the masses were prepared to play their part the day the Battle of France should begin.

### *THE FRENCH FORCES OF THE INTERIOR AND THE WAR*

By the end of 1943 the Resistance Movement was well organised. The various groups and reorganised political parties, as well as the C.G.T., had come into being again and formed the "National Council of Resistance". With the approach of the invasion, the members of this Committee began to differ more and more in their political outlook. They did not lose sight of the immediate aim, the expulsion of the invader and the liberation of French soil; but such events were already anticipated in their minds and their real cause of anxiety was the question of the economic and political basis on which the new France should be established. They were all agreed that the economic question overshadowed the political one. Almost all were agreed on the need for the nationalisation of the key industries, mines and banks. Controlled economy was the order of the day. Some of the Socialists who had gone to London, however, quickly forgot their mission for a renewed Socialism, even going so far as to drop the very word "Socialism" so as not to irritate the others and thus maintain the "sacred national unity" which had always expected sacrifices from them, but never from the Right Wing parties; it was as though their unquestioned courage in the Underground struggle against a resolute enemy was unable to change into "civic courage" in face of their leader. The French workers, however, were discussing the many ticklish problems more and more openly and showed no desire to hedge them. Socialism was for them no dream for which France was not "ripe", nor something outside the scope of practical realisation, but a very real and near event, and they did not expect to have fought in vain. The Socialist Party in France had a clear-cut and definite programme. Even the Communist Party in France had avoided vague, high-sounding catchwords.

The realisation of a political programme, however, needs care-



ful preparation, and this was where, which was in no way unusual, differences of opinion began to arise and sub-groups of the various organisations to form. Thus an "Establishment Committee of the National Liberation Movement" was created to which the National Liberation Movements and other organisations belonged, though the old political parties were excluded. The Resistance movements—*Combat*, *Franc-Tireur*, *Libération* (Southern Area), *Résistance*, *Défense de la France*—all of which had their own papers, joined. This movement took on a political character, attacking the "old parties", with the exception of the Communists and in favour of the creation of the *Parti Unique*. It attempted to give "Gaullism" a political programme.

The days of duplicating clandestine leaflets had passed, and newspapers like *Le Populaire* and *L'Humanité* were running into tens of thousands of copies. Even a literary review, *Les Cahiers de Libération*, appeared, as well as a special paper, *Le Palais Libre*, for the legal profession.

A weekly, *Compagnons*, existed that had never joined the clandestine ranks, but continued apparently under Pétain's orders and writing in favour of the "Work Charter" of the new system, yet possibly did more than any other to foster the spirit of revolt, especially the outright revolutionary spirit of the workers, particularly in Lyons, and by its very existence did no little towards making the strikes in that area effective. The workers, with their instinct for detecting the truth behind camouflage, soon appreciated the real aims of this publication, which attacked Vichy institutions while apparently supporting them and made over-zealous interest appear the reason for its criticism. By September, 1943, the Vichy authorities began to register surprise at the success of *Compagnons*, for *L'Effort*, and *La France Socialiste*, *Au Travail* and *Atelier*, the collaborationist papers, produced by some of the Socialist leaders or by the C.G.T., were hardly ever read, and they at last appreciated the clever game played by its editors, who were forced to seek refuge in flight, and the publication then came to an end. For once the dangerous game of publicly acting the collaborationist had been completely successful, because the motive had been a pure one from the start. The workers' instinct had not been deceived, nor will it be when other real collaborationists produce similar excuses in an attempt to save themselves.

France, therefore, seething below the surface, was awaiting the arrival of D-Day to arise against her enemies. The time of waiting was long and wearisome, nerve-racking and full of disappointments, but the day the landing took place the Resis-

tance forces carried out to the letter their orders to upset German communications. They were soon to receive their reward. Their heroic contribution has been publicly recognised by General Eisenhower. The *maquisards* were promoted to "French Forces of the Interior".

The Forces of the Interior were symbolically united with the Forces of the Empire, the France which had never laid down her arms came openly into the lists side by side with the Allies.

The political situation in Algiers resembled the 1944 spring fever in France. Groups and sub-groups were formed in the Consultative Assembly. Plans were elaborated for the re-establishment of the administration in France. There was no lack of criticism. Freedom of the Press to a certain extent and freedom of speech were re-established and the people of the Resistance did not hesitate to make their opinions known. The Committee, in actual fact a government, adopted the title of "Provisional Government of the Republic". (On the very day, the 23rd of October, 1944, it was recognised by the Allies *de jure* as the "Provisional Government of France", the first traitor of the "*élite*", Georges Suarez, was condemned to death in Paris.) It met the wishes of the people in France and decided in advance in principle the nationalisation of the great key industries, the mines and banks. The Socialist leaders became bolder and again made a plea for the execution of a vast Socialist programme, being aware that the people would no longer tolerate being trapped by "tricksters". Félix Gouin, the most clear-sighted of the leaders and the best informed about the work of the Resistance, nevertheless uttered this warning in *Fraternité*: "We must be wary, however, because on the fall of Hitler there will be a vast political upheaval on an international scale which may lead our democracy and all the other democracies towards a kind of purified, humanised Fascism of less wild aspect and less fierce character than that of Berchtesgaden. In the chaos which will of necessity follow the fall of the European slave system enforced by Hitler, reactionary and conservative social forces will re-group immediately and attempt to seize again the reins of control. This time, however, the people of the Resistance have decided to keep careful watch that any such attempts be strangled at birth, if necessary by force."

A complete picture of France in mourning, with hope renewed but still racked and tortured, in the year of liberation, should include the papers and reviews that continued to appear with official blessing. Some of them have been attempting a strategic

change of front; Carbuccia, for instance, had Henri Béraud ousted from *Gringoire*.

The majority of these publications, however, have not changed their tone; their position is similar to that of the *Moniteur Officiel* at the time of Napoléon's landing on his escape from Elba. Napoléon . . . He was the "Corsican" then, the "usurper"; but on reaching Grenoble he was raised to a general by the *Moniteur*, the General *Buonaparte* to stress his Corsican-Italian origin. On his triumphal entry into Lyons he was hailed as Napoléon, and on reaching Fontainebleau honoured with the official title of Prince of Elba; three days later the *Moniteur* stated in all simplicity, "The Emperor has entered Paris".

The Council of State had in turn sent addresses in almost identical terms to the Bourbon Louis XVIII and to the Emperor. Someone, however, always has to pay for a practical "joke" of this kind in France, with the result that the national hero could not escape the hatred and vengeance of the White Terror. The daughter of Louis XVI, the last hope for appeal at her uncle's Court, was, in spite of her pious and religious character, adamant—and Marshal Ney was shot. So was Pucheu. Attempts are nevertheless being made to draw the veil over painful memories.

Lest it be forgotten that the *maquisards* were ruthlessly tortured by the "Militia", who used methods which would not have put their Nazi and Japanese masters to shame, and whose evil lies and pitiless fanaticism should not be let slide into oblivion, so that they, too, may face a pitiless, but just, trial, their activities and behaviour during the campaign of liberation should be carefully remembered. Demonstrations against Allied airmen prisoners were "arranged" in Paris; the *Cri du Peuple* of June 30th, 1944, published obviously faked photographs. Great publicity was given to the bravery and courage of the young volunteers who fell in Russia or during the "fight against the *maquis*".

To understand the soul of the French in all its complexity, the facts must be faced, and also the apparently contradictory schism between two distinct sections of the people, the vast majority on the one hand and a small, very active, fanatical and almost equally sincere minority on the other. It is heart-breaking to find the same phrase used by both factions—"that France may live"—"a young man gave his life as sacrifice in Russia. He enrolled with his two brothers, and his father encouraged his keen desire to devote his life to his leader, his ideal, his party"; and the tortured mother? "My wife hides her sadness. She is proud of her son's sacrifice and his greatness of heart. There

can be no more happiness. We have sacrificed our happiness for France."

While the vicious fanaticism of the "Militia" is almost terrifying and might well lead to doubt of the future of mankind, the heroism of the members of the Resistance, who gave their lives *pour les lendemains qui chantent* is such as to reflect on everyone the illumination of true *grandeur*, greatness of spirit.

It would be a waste of time to turn to the official reviews to obtain an idea of intellectual life in France before the Liberation. They did not represent the spirit of France. *Candide*, famous baby sister of *Gringoire*, showed no signs of change of tone or recantation, but remained a stagnant pool. *Le fin* Paul Claudel wrote an article on the "creative spirit", but which did he mean—of the new France, of suffering, or of hope? His article did not concern itself with these; it will remain a museum piece and he has mummified in it himself.

Another "great" personality, half a member of the Académie Française, Jérôme et Jean Tharaud (these two brothers are still writing—O height of originality!—together in the first person singular as though this couple were one author, but only Jérôme is a member of the Académie) consistently reactionary and anti-Semitic, exploits, as was fashionable under Vichy, once more Charles Péguy. He wrote that a poor poet, one of his friends and also one of Péguy's, asked his wife before he died to give his grandmother's crucifix to his son so that he in turn might later pass it on to his children "so that they may preserve the ideal of the greatness and honour of a French family". These two words "greatness" and "honour", relics of Louis XIV and Napoléon, seemed to haunt the minds of the French *bourgeois*, and were as dangerous for the stability and peace of Europe as the megalomania of the Germans, "conquerors of the world". How different are the words used by the sixteen-year-old martyr hero who wrote to his mother before his death that he was giving his life for France, not for a "proud France, but a progressive France", for a France always leading the cultural progress of mankind. This child expresses the real spirit of eternal France far better than the two "great intellectuals".

His is the spirit of the Resistance, the new spirit, anti-war and anti-chauvinistic, the constructive spirit representative of the real "creative spirit".

*THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN*

"Wise men of all ages have always said the same thing and the stupid, the immense majority in every age, have always done the same thing, that is to say the opposite, and thus will it always be.

"That is why Voltaire said—'We will leave this world as stupid and as wicked as we found it when we came into it.'"

—Schopenhauer, *Aphorisms on the Wisdom of Life*.

ONLY one man was left in the ruins of Coutances and he hailed the French war correspondent, Pierre Gosset, with the words, "Welcome, monsieur. I am the President of the League of the Rights of Man. I have not left Coutances for even a day."

This man and this scene are a living symbol of the France of 1789, the France that has smashed Voltaire's cynicism and the France that will show the world that Schopenhauer's pessimism is without justification.

This man was conscious that the rights of man will live on for ever, the spiritual basis of society in general and of the French community in particular. These rights do not form part of any constitution, but no constitution can be drawn up without their incorporation.

The Resistance has been seeking a new form for these unalterable rights.

For this reason an attempt is made here to help in this constructive search.

No disparagement is intended of the everlasting majesty of the "Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen", nor of its intrinsic value, nor of the permanent service rendered to mankind, by stating that the Declaration was born of the conflict of its time with all the prejudices of the period, and though the fundamental principles remain for the most part immutable and inalienable, there are others which should be brought into line with the economic development of the present age. Let us take as an example Article 17, which declares that property is an inviolable and sacred right. Modern economic and social development does not conform to this idea, for it may well be held that individual property is not a sacred right, but on the contrary a privilege, become a burden to the life of the community. This problem can no longer be hedged, since the Revolution in Russia completely abolished private property, and almost all the leaders of the Allied nations refer to the great

burden of private ownership, of mines, the great key industries, banks, insurance companies, etc., as well as to their great responsibility to the community.

An intermediary solution should perhaps be sought between the principle expressed in Article 17, which in 1789 held the right of property as sacred and inviolable, and the principle of the Russian Revolution, which abolished it in 1917. In any case, a decision must be reached with regard to this principle, which supersedes by far all others in importance, if the rights of modern man are to be determined in this industrialised age.

It might be said, for example, that the French community when choosing a form of government would decide how far the right of property is inviolable and sacred and how far it is not, and hence can be violated or even abolished. On the other hand, the fundamental principle might be laid down from the start that, property not being an inviolable and sacred right, the community should decide how far such a right can be abolished or only restricted. In the latter event the reverse of the Declaration of 1789 would be adopted subject only to the community deciding how far the opposite principle should be applied. The difference between the two points of view is evident. In the former the main question would be left open and the final decision between the abolition of private property, its maintenance in entirety or an intermediary solution reserved for the National Assembly. In the latter the future National Assembly would to a certain extent be restricted, the decision being taken in advance (the candidate could be pledged for or against this principle, as in the United States for the preliminary party elections the candidates are pledged for a certain Presidential candidate) and ratified by the people that private property is not an inviolable and sacred right and this principle once adopted, only the choice of accepting this principle in entirety or in part would be left for discussions in the National Assembly. In such an event Article 17 could be drawn up in the following terms: "Property not being an inviolable and sacred right, the citizen may be deprived thereof should public necessity, legally determined, demand it. Under the same conditions, and exceptionally, the owner shall receive fair and just compensation."

As to the first Article, the magnificent phrase "Men are born and remain free and equal in rights" is of greater importance to-day than ever in view of the presence of a Hitler in the world. But the second phrase of this Article, "Social distinctions shall only be founded upon public usefulness," must be understood against the background of its time, the struggle against the

privileges of the nobility being at that time of paramount importance. The aim of Socialism is to create a class-less society. Without being a follower of Karl Marx, no one with a sincere desire for a new order in the society of the future can wish to uphold the preservation of social distinctions. It is therefore no longer sufficient to state that social distinctions should be dependent upon usefulness to the community, but essential in this case to insist on the intention of doing away entirely with all social distinctions. They cannot be *abolished by decree*, since they *exist* in the present form of society in a natural way. Should the economic basis of society remain fundamentally unchanged, the issuing of decrees would make no difference whatever to the vital functions of society. But if a definite economic change is envisaged and it is accepted that society cannot be suddenly transformed, the aim can nevertheless be expressed in the form of a fundamental principle to give the superstructure of society the requisite directive to conform with the necessities and desires of the basic infra-structure. In this sense only should the following proposal be understood: "The use of the citizen shall depend entirely on his usefulness to the community in a society tending to abolish all social distinctions."

Article 2 states: "The aim of all political associations is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man." This statement is as valid to-day as it was 150 years ago. But what are these rights? Freedom? Naturally. Property? Here the importance of Article 17 can immediately be seen. It is no longer possible merely to say "property" for the reasons already explained. The word could be simply omitted. It would be equally possible to create a new notion of property by dividing it into two parts. On the one hand the individual and personal aspect of property could be considered in the sense of the personal and individual affairs of a citizen, his house, lodgings or other personal belongings, etc., i.e. this part of capital which does not exploit and which the owner does not invest. On the other hand, the general and productive aspect of property, i.e. this part of capital used for exploitation, allowed to accumulate, or invested, including all means of production, such as factories, mines, and other industrial or agricultural installations, could be defined. The subdivision of the notion of "property" once accepted, the protection of thus clearly defined individual and personal property could be agreed as a natural right, while general and productive property would be excluded. It would then be possible instead of "property" to say "individual and personal property".

Article 2 includes "security" and "resistance to oppression" as other rights. Security is to be understood as the right of every citizen to protection against an abuse of executive power. It should be remembered that the Article was drawn up at a time when *lettres de cachet* were still in use. In Hitler's Europe they have had a come-back. What might well have seemed before 1939 an accepted and agreed right scarcely worthy of discussion, to-day appears not only of paramount value, but worthy of new formulation. And here some kind of French *habeas corpus* should be inserted, a clause stating that a person shall not arbitrarily be arrested, outlawed, or brought for trial. President Roosevelt's four freedoms—freedom of speech, of religion, from want and from fear—could also be inserted here as "natural and imprescriptible rights of man". Or, Sir Stafford Cripps' formula could be chosen: "The same opportunities for the young and for all men, work for all who are able to work, security for those who have need of it, the end of privileges for the few, the preservation of civil rights for all citizens." It is difficult to formulate these points into a declaration of principle. It might perhaps be possible instead of "security" to say "security from arbitrary action, abuse of power, and poverty". With regard to "resistance to oppression", it was necessary for the Constituent Assembly to stress this right, as the American Congress had also done, in order to establish their right to revolt respectively against the arbitrary power of the King of France or the King of England. At the present time it is as well to remind the civilised world that the oppressed peoples of Europe always retained this sacred right of revolt. The second phrase of Article 2 could therefore be drawn up as follows: "These rights are freedom of thought, of speech, of conscience; individual and personal property; security against arbitrary action and abuse of power; work under equal conditions for all citizens in accordance with the needs of the community; protection against poverty and resistance to oppression."

Article 3 is still as important as ever. "The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body of men nor individual may exercise any authority which does not proceed direct from the nation."

Article 4 is so well formulated as to be adaptable to the economic and social changes of the present age. The Constituent Assembly did not understand freedom to mean unlimited freedom, whereby anyone abusing his rights could paralyse society. For these reasons, it decreed that the limits of individual freedom be determined by law. This Article could, therefore, serve



as a basis without a word being changed for a progressive society.

Article 5 is definitely influenced by English law, which has as a basic principle that anything not forbidden by law is permissible. We know that English Common Law pre-supposes the rights of man and only makes mention of them when laying down the penalty for possible infringement. This Article is somewhat in contradiction to the spirit of French law which, on the contrary, in some cases tabulates in detail the citizen's right. It must also be remembered that in the troubled times of the post-war period the legislator will need to issue general directives and leave their execution to the executive bodies empowered to issue decrees and orders. The phrase, therefore, "No one may be compelled to do anything not required by law", may possibly not quite conform to the spirit likely to be prevalent in France and Europe after the war. There are, however, many things which are not expressly forbidden by law which will nevertheless not be permissible because contrary to the spirit of the new organisation of the State. Furthermore, the citizen is protected by Articles 2 and 4 against abuse. The clause might be drawn up: "The people's legitimate representative body has the right to forbid any action considered harmful to society; any action, even though not expressly forbidden by law, may be prohibited for the good of the community, and every citizen may be compelled to obey such orders providing they be not contrary to the spirit of this declaration."

Article 6 expresses the principles of a true democracy, valid for every age and every form of government, providing the form of government be democratic: that Law is an expression of the will of the community, the principle of representation, universal suffrage, equality of all citizens in the sight of the law, admission of citizens to "all honorary elevations, posts and public offices according to their abilities and without distinction except that of talent and qualification".

Article 7 expresses the right of *habeas corpus*. No change is necessary.

Article 8 stipulates that the penalty inflicted on an accused person shall not represent a spirit of vengeance but one of re-education in an attempt to save the individual for the service of the community.

Article 9 is as valid to-day as ever, because violations of the law remain the same whether under the Regency, the Empire or the Republic, if the law is made to serve as a political weapon. In view of the arbitrary arrests carried out in Vichy France

against political opponents without attempt to conform with any law, the importance of this Article cannot be over-emphasised. There is, however, no need to change the phraseology adopted by the Constituent Assembly. Moreover, by retaining the same wording, emphasis is given to the fact that in the new France a political opponent shall not be arrested simply because he is an opponent, but only in the event of his opinions in opposition to the new system of government leading him to violate the law.

Article 10 appears to have become superfluous, since freedom of opinion, including religious views, as the Article specifically states, is already covered by Article 2.

Article 11 specifies the right to unrestricted communication of ideas and opinions. No change is necessary.

Article 12 appears to be too closely linked with the period of the Declaration. The wording might perhaps be modified to "The public force shall only be used to protect the rights of the community and the citizen".

Articles 13, 14 and 15 formulate the citizen's rights regarding public contributions. They are little more than a development of the principles expressed in Article 6. Further Articles could be inserted here to conform with whatever economic system may be chosen as a basis for the new French community.

A new preamble could also be drawn up on the same lines.

A comparison of the old text and the suggested modifications (to be found in the Appendix) will make clear the greatness of the achievement of the "Grande Révolution". After more than 150 years few fundamental changes are required to bring this magnificent expression of the liberation of mankind into line with the new trend of modern economic development. The new France will be able to show to the world that in the great battle for, or against, the Revolution the trinity of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité* has definitely, and for ever, won the day.

## FRANCE AND EUROPE

FRANCE's foreign policy will also be influenced in the first instance by the economic system chosen. A Socialist France, or at least with a socially progressive programme, will adopt a policy tending towards the unification of Europe and become the true exponent of a real "New Order" for peace.

The Resistance is well aware that a narrow nationalism which might well develop from the Nazi system in Europe and in a

fashion even more disastrous than in 1919, would be an insurmountable obstacle to such pacification. Should economic co-operation on that account remain mere empty words, world reconstruction will be nothing but a chimera. Sincere and loyal collaboration among all the Allies is essential if this aim is to be achieved.

But it is even more important that the Allies should be ready with a common policy, for the next generation, towards the country which, after all, geographically, constitutes the heart of Europe—Germany. Such a policy will be strongly influenced by the attitude of France; it will in fact soon be clear that nothing has been gained by declaring China the fourth great world power, and much has been lost by passing over France in Smuts fashion. It will soon be only too evident that the real problems have once again been hedged.

France, therefore, by the very fact of her existence, will play an outstanding part in the settlement of Europe. She will twenty years hence be once again responsible for the state of world affairs.

Should France again lose the peace in Europe there will this time be no excuse.

Problems of disarmament, frontier boundaries and security will arise.

Before deciding on a policy the future governors of France should give a thought to the past, the true history of the past without embellishment.

The same as after 1918, Germany will be physically and morally incapable of making war for another twenty years. The problem, therefore, is not so much how to disarm a defeated Germany as how to prevent her ever rearming again. Germany in 1920 was practically disarmed. In these times, when the very latest weapons are out of date in a few months and one type of tank or plane is rapidly superseded by a "new edition", the clandestine attempts of the *Black Reichswehr* with its "secret court" for traitors—the *Vehme*—can be looked upon as ridiculous and even childish. The real rearmament of Germany began with Hitler, and in no way secretly. Never before had a dictator announced his intention of rearming and preparing for war with greater impudence than Hitler did.

Yet even when Pilsudski suggested to France in 1934 that a preventive war should be made against Hitler (Poland has always made the refusal of this suggestion her excuse for changing her policy), it was still in the light of a children's knock-out game.

We now know that Hitler would have retracted in 1936 had the Allies taken a firm stand, and his prestige would have collapsed like a balloon. Fritsch warned him as late even as 1938 that the occupation of Austria was madness.

The disarmament of Germany has therefore always been an easy matter and will continue to be, providing the Allies have a common aim. After the Treaty of Rapallo in 1922 v. Seeckt had arms manufactured in Russia for use—against the Allies. From 1933 onwards world industry was busy supplying Hitler with arms and raw materials for use—against the Russians. Had the Allies not been waging an indirect war between themselves before Munich, using Germany as a pawn, hostilities would never have broken out. Even though Hitler had, in 1939, won the first round of the battle of world rearmament, he would never have begun a war had his “intuition” led him to foresee that one day he would have to fight on two or more fronts. A “realist” France, therefore, should always remember that the disarmament of Germany does not depend on the latter’s bad faith, but rather on the good faith of the Allies.

Once this point is admitted, there will be, as in 1918, two possible methods of dealing with the beaten enemy; the third, well meriting the title “too little and too late”, will no longer be considered.

Germany could be treated as the Nazis treated their victims, as the Turks treated the Armenians, as the Poles treated the Ruthenian peasants, as the Serbs treated the Macedonians, and such a policy would be easy to carry out—if the determination did not weaken.

War could be waged against them for ever; they could be slowly smothered and exterminated. Once such a policy were adopted, however, there could never be real peace in Europe. All the talk about “re-education” and “pacification” in Europe would be so many empty words to stuff the minds of the democratic peoples.

The opposite from what was done in 1919 could be tried. After the definite elimination of the S.S., the S.A. and all the other war criminals, which means about a million men, the remainder of the German people could be treated in a humane and friendly fashion. That is the opinion held by the *Populaire*, which wrote: “It is essential to destroy the German military machine, help the people’s revolution, solve the land problem, do away with heavy industry, nationalise the Junkers’ property . . . with the close and fraternal collaboration of the German democrats.”

Such a policy, however, could be of no value unless introduced in a grand manner. An essential condition for a policy of the kind would be to start with a definite historic gesture, to make it clear to the world and the Germans that we are not "all the same bad lot". The success of the re-education of a psychopathic case, as of a whole diseased people, inevitably depends upon the right symptomatic gesture being made at the start, otherwise every attempt must fail.

The touchstone in such a case would be the frontier question. Any increase of French territory beyond her 1939 frontiers would give the world the impression that France was ready to accept any excuse for the adoption of power politics.

The frontier problems in Europe are as old as the princes' quarrels, and these frontiers have changed many times. A boundary as such is not essential for the maintenance of peace; a new frontier is just as good as an ancient one, provided the new one is not the outcome of a "balance-of-power" policy and fulfils the essential condition of contributing to the pacification of Europe. The important thing is the spirit influencing decisions at the moment when boundaries are fixed. France's first gesture, therefore, should be to repudiate those spokesmen who demand the "Saar and the Palatinate, stolen from France" should be taken back.

In its second address on the Franco-Prussian war the General Council of the International Working Men's Association condemned on September 9th, 1870, the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine on the "pretext" of Germany's military security.

"If boundaries are to be fixed by military interests there will be no end to claims, because every military line is necessarily faulty, and may be improved by annexing some more outlying territory; and moreover, they can never be fixed finally and fairly, because they always must be imposed by the conqueror upon the conquered, and consequently carried within them the seed of fresh wars."

The reasons given in this statement are just as valid to-day as they were then. So are the protests raised by the Central Committee of the German Workmen's Social Democrat Party on September 5th, 1870, claiming an "honourable peace for France" and "the recognition of the French Republic" and adding:

"We protest against the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. And we are conscious of speaking in the name of the German working class. In the common interest of France and Germany, in the interest of Western Civilisation against Eastern Barbarism, the

German workmen will not patiently tolerate the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine."

But above all, France should remember her own protest:

"You invoke the principle of nationality, but your understanding of it is different from the rest of Europe. According to you this principle would authorise a powerful state seizing a province by force, under the sole condition that it could be stated that this province is occupied by the same race as that of this state. The principle as we understand it is that a population . . . should not belong to a state except of its own free will and consent . . . whether Prussia will have it or not, it is this principle that will prove triumphant in the end." (FUSTEL DE COULANGES, *Questions Contemporaines*.)

The principle expressed in this protest "whether Prussia will have it or not" (and no one ever wishes to drop the letter "P"), should not change its basic value, especially not for France. For, at the moment of victory France should show the world that she is sincere in her moral conduct and not swayed by circumstances.

When the moral basis for security has been established by these means, France should turn towards the practical realisation in Europe of a "new economic order", which alone can guarantee her real "security". A prosperous Europe would never have any desire for war. The old system has shown beyond dispute that it was totally unable to ensure the peoples' welfare. France with her creative genius will have an opportunity of proving that she can transform her economic order without any of the internal upheavals which generally accompany the birth of a new period, and create a system which would do away with capitalism and yet not destroy the individual. By carrying out this "feat of arms" on the peaceful battlefield of economy, France would naturally take her place as the social leader of the new Europe.

This is the great practical and idealist rôle awaiting the new France in a Europe desirous of peace in the full meaning of "Revolution—Civilisation".

One of the F.F.I. delegates expressed these ideas at Algiers on July 7th, 1944: "We are a revolutionary force. Our aim is that in the future every human being shall be able freely to grow and develop without being held back in any way by the oppressive power of money."

There lies the cultural rôle of France, there lies her true greatness.

In this sense only was General de Gaulle right when he declared:

*"France will be great or she will not be."*

In this sense, too, Paul Viénot was unequivocally emphatic in his last speech in London at the July 14th celebration, 1944:

*"France will be new or she will not be."*

"For we can no longer give the name of France to a narrow, restricted country, *without social or political invention*, with no great intentions at home and abroad, *with no ideal as a beacon to light the way.*"

This new France will then have given back to the world the great trinity—Liberty—Equality—Fraternity.

This new France will again become the spiritual, intellectual and symbolic "country" of every European.

This new France will again be his

## "SECONDE PATRIE"

### LE CHASSEUR NOIR

*Les feuilles des bois—*

*Le loup de ton sentier s'écarte.*

*Que ta meute à sa suite partel!*

*Cours! fais-le choir!*

*Chasse le brigand Bonaparte,*

*O Chasseur Noir!*

*Tout reprend sa forme première.*

*Tu redeviens la France altière*

*Si belle à voir,*

*L'ange blanc vêtu de lumière.*

*O Chasseur Noir!*

*Les feuilles des bois, du vent remuées;*

*Tombent . . . on dirait*

*Que le sabbat sombre aux rauques huées*

*A fui la forêt;*

*Le clair chant du coq perce les nuées:*

*Ciel! l'aube apparaît!*

—VICTOR HUGO, *Les Châtiments*, 1852.

## APPENDIX

### DECLARATION OF THE RIGHTS OF MAN AND CITIZEN

#### OLD TEXT

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights; social distinctions shall only be founded upon public usefulness.

2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; these rights are freedom, property, security and resistance to oppression.

3. The principle of all sovereignty resides essentially in the nation; no body of men nor individual shall exercise any authority which does not proceed direct from the nation.

4. Liberty consists in freedom of action, providing no harm is done to another; the natural rights of man have no limits other than those necessary to secure every other man the free exercise of the same rights; these limits can only be determined by law.

#### PROPOSED TEXT

1. Men are born and remain free and equal in rights; the use of the citizen shall depend entirely on his usefulness to the community in a society tending completely to abolish all social distinctions.

2. The aim of all political association is the preservation of the natural and imprescriptible rights of man; these rights are freedom of thought, of speech, of conscience; individual and personal property; security against arbitrary action and abuse of power; work under equal conditions for all citizens in accordance with the needs of the community; protection against poverty and resistance to oppression.

3. No change.

4. No change.



5. Law can only prohibit actions harmful to the community; nothing shall be prevented which is not forbidden by law and no one shall be compelled to be anything not required by law.

5. The people's legitimate representative body has the right to forbid any action considered harmful to the community; any action, even though not expressly forbidden by law, may be prohibited for the good of the community and every citizen may be compelled to obey such orders providing they be not contrary to the spirit of this Declaration.

6. Law is an expression of the will of the community. Every citizen has the right to participate individually or through a representative in its formation; it should be the same for all whether it protects or punishes. All citizens being equal in the sight of the law, all are equally eligible for all honorary elevations, posts and public offices according to their abilities and without distinction except that of talent and qualifications.

6. No change.

7. No person shall be accused, arrested or imprisoned except in the cases and according to the forms prescribed by law; any individual supporting, executing or causing to be executed any arbitrary order, shall be punished; any citizen summoned or arrested by virtue of the law shall submit without delay, resistance constituting an offence.

7. No change.

8. The law shall provide for such penalties only as are strictly and obviously necessary, and no one shall suffer punishment unless legally applied by virtue of a law passed and promulgated before the commission of the offence.

8. No change.

9. All persons being held innocent until they shall have been declared guilty, rigorous measures, if arrest prove needful, other than those requisite for the arrest of the individual, shall be punished by law.

10. No individual shall be molested on account of his personal opinions, including his religious views, providing such opinions do not disturb the public order established by law.

11. The unrestricted communication of ideas and opinions is one of the most precious of the rights of man; every citizen, therefore, may freely speak, write and print, being, however, responsible for any abuse of this liberty as defined by law.

12. The security of the rights of man and the citizen requires a public force; this force is therefore created for the benefit of all and not for the particular benefit of those to whom it is entrusted.

13. A common contribution is necessary for the maintenance of the public force and the cost of administration; this shall be equitably divided among all citizens in proportion to their means.

14. Every citizen has the right individually or through a representative to decide the necessity for public contributions, to grant them freely, to know the use to which they are put and to determine the proportion, method of assessment, collection and duration of such contribution.

9. No change.

10. To be omitted.

11. No change.

12. The public force shall only be used to protect the rights of the community and the citizen.

13. No change.

14. No change.

15. The community has the right to request an account of administration from every public official.

15. No change.

16. Any community in which security of rights is not assured nor separation of powers agreed has no constitution.

16. To be omitted.

17. Property being an inviolable and sacred right, no one shall be deprived thereof except where public necessity, legally determined, shall clearly demand it, and on condition that the owner shall have received fair and just compensation.

17. Property not being an inviolable and sacred right, the citizen may be deprived thereof should public necessity, legally determined, demand it. Under the same conditions, and exceptionally, the owner shall receive fair and just compensation.



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